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**THE ELECTION,**

**A POEM.**





# THE ELECTION:

9.

A POEM,

IN SEVEN BOOKS.

*(By John Sterling.)*

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*Fluellen.* Ancient Pistol, I do partly understand your meaning.  
*Pistol.* Why then rejoice therefore.—SHAKESPEARE, *Henry V.*

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THE ELECTION.



BOOK I.



## THE ELECTION.

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### BOOK I.

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IN some high region dwells a Muse whose aid  
Helps modern geniuses to drive their trade,  
To circulating-libraries imparts  
A spell commanding countless pence and hearts,  
And spreads o'er just three volumes sibylline  
The hero's coats and passions, woes and wine.

Could I her influence feel, 'twere mine to show  
How Lords and Tailors rule this world below ;  
How youths at Clubs, while sipping coffee, solve  
The questions pedants through long lives revolve ;  
What love-sick pangs, how bravely borne, convulse  
The newest gold-flowered waistcoats made by Stultz ;

How ghosts in gauze with poisoned fruit-knife stab  
E'en him who drives a coronetted cab ;  
And fiends perfumed, not sulphurous, teach despair  
To souls that dine at eight in Belgrave-square.

But too refined the song that scales the heaven  
Of evening breakfasts, and Hyde Park at seven,  
And dares recount what metaphysic shocks  
Invade the bright world of an Opera-box,  
And draws its tones of mystical delight  
From well-bred London's long Walpurgis-night.  
Not Fashion's Muse in lace and pearl awakes  
My rhapsody, but one that brews and bakes,  
A dowdy goddess in a printed gown  
Records the simple tale of Aleborough town.

With zealous heart I sing, but feeble voice,  
Great Britain's boast, her sage Electors' choice,  
And those high days when Aleborough proudly sent  
Her Man to sit in England's parliament.  
Thou Muse of shouts and speeches ! Goddess wise,  
By whom inspired we hit on prosperous lies,

Inform the song with such diviner sense  
As thou canst give to hustings eloquence ;  
And with that downward use of the sublime,  
By critics called the Bathos, aid my rhyme !

Cox represented Aleborough, patriot pure,  
On whose tried firmness Europe leant secure :  
But, woe to manufactures, land, and stocks !  
Europe and Aleborough could not rescue Cox.  
At London's Mansion-house, the Poultry's pride,  
Cox in his country's service dined, and died.  
One cook by turtle slew a man, whom ten  
With all their art could not revive again.

The sun was setting o'er the old church-tower,  
That glittered softly while it pealed the hour ;  
And smoke from many a chimney curling slow,  
Marked where the black tea-kettle steamed below :  
The aproned workman, tools in hand, sought out  
Some nook for meditation and brown stout ;  
Small idle groups were chatting here and there,  
These near the Lion, those beside the Bear,



Each heart by some grave theme alike possessed,  
The maid's new ribbons, and the man's old jest,  
The last fresh murder and the price of hay,  
And how Ned Scroggs' apprentice ran away.

Break off, ye triflers ! Hark, a distant hum,  
And then a clatter, tells the coach is come.  
Two dames within, five dusty shapes above,  
A red-faced coachman, grand as thundering Jove,  
Dash through the admiring street, and crowding round  
Come ostlers, waiters, loiterers, tow'rd the sound.  
Soon spreads the direful rumour unconfined—  
Cox—dead—our member !—Horror strikes mankind ;  
Shrugs, whispers, open mouths—and then, alas !  
Huge joy breaks out like flaring streams of gas.  
A new election ! Glory to the town !  
For all there's profit, and for some renown.  
The Lion opes his hungry jaws and springs,  
And the Black Bear seems dancing as he swings.

Before an hour the patriot Blues are met ;  
Though Cox is gone, the cause shall triumph yet,

The sacred cause of right ; till it prevails,  
The universe hangs trembling in the scales.  
The Lion for the Blues ! our flag's unfurled,  
And Mogg, instead of Cox, shall awe the world.

The big placard, with thunder in its look,  
Glares like a page from Destiny's own book ;  
The drums and trumpets hired augment their zeal  
By strong potations till inspired they reel ;  
The chaises three, and omnibus immense,  
Display the Lion's whole magnificence ;  
And Mogg's committee-men, a Spartan few,  
To save the sinking State would die True Blue.

Though short of days, how large the mind of man—  
A godlike force inclosed within a span !  
To climb the skies we spurn our nature's clog,  
And toil as Titans to elect a Mogg.

And who was Mogg ? O Muse ! the man declare,  
How excellent his worth, his parts how rare.

A younger son, he learnt in Oxford's halls  
The spherul harmonies of billiard-balls,  
Drank, hunted, drove, and hid from Virtue's frown  
His venial follies in decorum's gown.  
Too wise to doubt on insufficient cause,  
He signed old Cranmer's lore without a pause,  
And knew that Logic's cunning rules are taught  
To guard our creed, and not invigorate thought,—  
As those bronze steeds at Venice kept for pride,  
Adorn a town where not one man can ride.  
From Isis sent, with all her loud acclaims,  
The laws he studied on the banks of Thames.  
Park, race, and play, in his capacious plan,  
Combined with Coke to form the finished man,  
Until the wig's ambrosial influence shed  
Its last full glories on the lawyer's head.

But vain are mortal schemes. The eldest son  
At Harrier-hall had scarce his stud begun,  
When Death's pale courser took the squire away  
To lands where never dawns a hunting-day ;  
And so, while Thomas vanished 'mid the fog,  
Bright rose the morning-star of Peter Mogg,

And loud the bells were jangled from the spire  
To tell the counsellor was now the squire.

Great at the festive board, but greater still  
When quarter sessions owned his legal skill ;  
At public meetings ne'er did mightier voice  
In Aleborough make the very stones rejoice,  
Both firm and fluent as the neighbouring pump,  
And like its handle seemed his hand to thump.  
Rich too was Mogg, and now but forty-seven,  
A man for this great crisis raised by Heaven,—  
Red, round, and jolly, gentlemanly, free,  
In law profound, but yet no pedant he,—  
His own fat acres were his favourite book,  
And hungry men might dine upon his look.  
He wore a yellow waistcoat and blue coat,  
And white the neckcloth on his crowing throat.

Soon sent for, soon he came. The full divan  
At midnight in the Lion hailed their man.  
The banker Snug, the builder Snooks was there,  
The draper Allsop, and the maltster Ware.

Sewell, who made the saddles for the squire,  
Would now fain see his patron mounted higher ;  
And parson Drum his holy zeal displayed,  
And lent so sound a churchman all his aid.  
There Small, who plied dear Mistress Mogg with pills,  
Prescribed her husband for a nation's ills.  
But chief of all amid that senate wise,  
Attorney Whisk had heard his country's cries ;  
Whisk, young in years, but mark'd by Fate for fame,  
Which Aleborough's Blues unborn shall loud proclaim—  
Assiduous, secret, smiling, shrewd, and bold,  
A brazen forehead, and a brain of gold ;  
The god, by men called Mercury, had less  
Of skill than he yet practised with success.

With flashing looks and eager shakes of hand,  
And rapid words, Mogg met the chosen band.  
The glow that virtue's loftiest thoughts instil  
Played o'er his head, and seemed his form to fill :  
Anticipated triumph, and the hope  
Of toils immortal, gave his spirit scope ;  
While the sharp lamplight struck his forehead bare,  
As if metallic lustre settled there ;

And thus each tongue the general joy would tell—  
I never saw Squire Peter look so well!

Meanwhile how fared the Reds? The death of Cox  
Must needs confound them had their souls been rocks.  
Their conquering foe was he, but now his death  
Stirred not their cause with hope's reviving breath;  
They had no candidate of name renowned  
Prepared to risk for them a thousand pound,  
And guessing all the woe design'd by Fate,  
Of Mogg they thought with reverential hate.  
Along the street that evening many a Red  
Passed quickly by, and hung the conscious head;  
In many a public-house exulting Blues  
Drank Mogg's success, and told the thrice-told news,  
While all his chief opponents groan'd their fears  
'Mid puffs of smoke, or mingled tea with tears.

But slight were others' griefs compared to those  
That broke Attorney Samuel Spark's repose.  
The Reds' grave Nestor he, a man sedate  
As ever filed a bill, or ruled a State,—

Whose look with dreadful mystery surrounds  
His sixty years and sixty thousand pounds.  
Tall as a whipping-post was he, like that  
Suggested fear, and was averse from fat ;  
His brow was stamped in hard reflection's mint,  
His eyes gained meaning from an inward squint ;  
His nose a hook with rigid menace hung  
Above the close-shut grate that barred his tongue,  
And short-cut dark and grizzled locks austere  
Seemed whispering craft to each large listening ear.  
Thus harsh and withered look'd the man whose thought  
Like fire in dry wood now so fiercely wrought,  
For he was one who scorned that Jews profane  
Should beat true Christians in the arts of gain.

The room he sat in, low secure and dark,  
Itself expressed the soul of Samuel Spark.  
Tin boxes there, and dusty books of law,  
Struck simple souls with deep suspicious awe ;  
And parchments old with faded curtains screened  
Might pass for ancient compacts with the fiend.  
A table once bedecked with verdant baize  
Now withered brown by years and Samuel's gaze,

A straight-backed chair for thirty winters pressed  
By one whose mighty spirit mocked at rest,  
An inkstand ever furnished from below  
With Stygian streams, the fount of mortal woe,—  
All this were trivial in another place,  
But here gained import from the owner's face.  
Lord Camden's portrait, and a county map,  
Were hung as baits within an iron trap,  
And one dull candle filled with spectral gloom  
Floor wall and ceiling of the attorney's room.

Here brooded he from hour to hour, and heard  
The heartless house-clock ticking undeterred,  
But nought could he devise : and yet if none  
Would face Squire Mogg, the Reds were quite undone ;  
And worst of all the rich Election's gain,  
Oft Spark's before, with Whisk would now remain ;  
Whisk ! upstart vile, whose bosom knew nor love  
To man below, nor faith in aught above :  
And while thus muttering, Samuel's face and form  
Writhed inly torn with hatred's pent-up storm.



'Tis strange—he thought—'tis very strange that I  
Who know the truth, and ne'er on shams rely,  
Should thus be baffled. 'Tis a fact confessed  
By every heart—all seek what suits them best ;  
And force or cunning aids in all the wish  
To fill my own from off my neighbour's dish.  
The moralists for hire may sing or say,  
But Man is Nature's cleverest beast of prey ;  
Our poison-flowers with Virtue's colours glow,  
And Reason's cobwebs only snare a foe,  
While e'en the loftiest teacher of the schools  
But hides his hook with brighter baits than fools.  
The dolt alone believes, the wise profess,  
And what's at bottom none do more than guess.  
Yet still, while Nature whispers to her son,  
—Be rich ! Be strong ! Be feared ! Be fawned upon !—  
And while my heart and hands obey—yet still  
Some frets and lets impede my forward will ;  
And this Election o'er the stormy sea  
Will waft that villain Whisk, and shipwreck me.

The hours passed on, and faint and fainter grew  
The distant shouts of Mogg's carousing crew.

Hurrah for Mogg ! from public-houses sent,  
Shrines oft with Freedom's glories eloquent ;  
For Mogg—whom twice in bargain fair he foiled,  
And left of full one half per cent. despoiled.  
Shall Mogg to all as craven thus disclosed,  
Start now to fame and triumph unopposed,  
And impeded by Whisk with waxen pinions rise,  
And soar unchallenged through the Aleborough skies ?  
Just Heaven ! kind Earth ! some happier plan suggest,  
Nor leave your Samuel's sorrows unredressed !

'Tis thus that mortal passion often claims  
Superior aid to help its baffled aims.  
Old Homer's heroes, when themselves too weak,  
Invoked a god his deadlier ire to wreak ;  
The adulterous knight to bring his love to pass  
Implored the Virgin's aid, and vowed a mass :  
The wave that tears the sailor's yards away  
Sweeps off his oaths, and he begins to pray ;  
And Spark's great soul, in that unhopeful hour,  
Clutched at a dream of interposing power.

But hark ! what shapeless rumour weak and far  
Breathes like the long sigh from a setting star ?  
It swells, it comes ; the rapid sound of wheels  
Unceasing indistinct on midnight steals ;  
Swiftly as Wakefield's Colonies advance,  
As sects in England or as plots in France,  
The sound is rushing on, nor stops before  
Fate gives the nod and points to Samuel's door.  
The lawyer trembles, and cold sweat breaks out  
On all his limbs in agonising doubt ;  
The bell is pulled, but ere it rings he grasps  
The hall-door key, the guarding chain unclasps,  
And standing in the doorway's gap of dark  
A stranger says—" I come to Mister Spark."

Few moments more, and then behold the pair  
In Samuel's office seated chair by chair ;  
The one grim, haggard, eager, sharp and grey ;  
The other young, and debonnair as day.  
The letter given and read, sad Samuel's face  
Grins with a wild explosion of grimace ;—  
Frank Vane, an angel from the stars come down,  
On the Red interest will contest the town.

Oh ! reader, hast thou seen the sun arise  
On tropic seas, and fill at once the skies ?  
Or winding down the Alpine steep of snow,  
Found in Val d'Ossola the south's free glow ?  
Or chanced within the Commons' House to hear  
A speech high pitched above the moment's cheer ?  
Or when in danger to be made a knight  
For life, escaped with nothing but the fright ?  
Or travelling in Arabia, reached a well  
And cool tent open to the infidel ?  
Then mayst thou guess what infinite surprise  
Shone brightly through the squint of Samuel's eyes.

Ten minutes' converse fixed the compact's grounds,  
And Frank engaged to pay twelve hundred pounds ;  
Then took his leave, and would in haste repair  
To sleep at his new citadel, the Bear.  
But Samuel would not part with such a guest,  
And Vane, thus urged, consented there to rest,  
And straight retired. But not to Spark there came  
The dull repose that meaner spirits claim.

He sat and mused, and oft the Poll-book turned,  
And all the champion in the lawyer burned ;  
And as he heard the clock, its blither sounds  
Now seemed repeating still—Twelve Hundred Pounds.

# THE ELECTION.



## BOOK II.



## BOOK II.

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THOUGH Cox had set for ever, Day once more  
On Aleborough rose, nor e'en court-mourning wore :  
And the broad Sun proceeded forth in state  
As if the sky's successful candidate,  
But that, alas ! for him, the unthrifty Sun  
Supports all parties, so is cheered by none.

The morn looked down on Samuel Spark's abode,  
Square, large, red-bricked, and close beside the road,  
And sent its beams to shame the twinkling light  
That helped the lawyer through the hours of night ;  
For, like a star, he slumbered not, but kept  
Watch for the world while it unheeding slept.

The day's first dawn behind his house displayed  
A fairer sight, a garden full of shade,



An old neglected haunt of birds and bees,  
With weedy paths, long grass, and mossy trees,  
Box-borders risen to bushes, walks of yew  
Grown up to ragged caves of funeral hue,  
Parterres now thickets, and a fountain's flow,  
That wandering crept a thing of long ago.

In this green maze of leaves, an harbour old  
Lies hid by hollies growing uncontrolled,  
A bowshot off the house. In its recess  
A lady sat, a youthful hermitess,  
The lawyer Samuel's niece and orphan ward,  
By him from life's gay sunshine closely barred.  
But Ann was young and beautiful and kind,  
And natural goodness all her thoughts refined,  
Though scanty knowledge had to her been taught,  
Save truths and dreams from some old volumes caught,  
As Chaucer, Sidney, Bacon's cold expanse,  
And cordial Plutarch's trumpet-breathed romance.  
A creature she for love and joy and trust,  
And not for fashion's restless self-disgust :  
Her large straw hat and dress of simple white  
Might well a milliner's contempt invite ;

But had she not been all alone, perhaps  
Ann also might have thought of morning caps.

Seldom had living lips enforced on her  
Such faith as realised beliefs aver :  
Alone 'mid babbling fools and canting knaves  
She sought the truths an ardent spirit craves,  
And so her musings ran in words like these :—  
Is Thought our health, or but our life's disease ?  
Whence come the struggles mortal breasts endure  
Against their lot ? And why is Truth obscure ?  
And is our Being thus with darkness filled,  
A garden ruined, or a waste untilled ?  
Are Heaven's blue shelter and this earth's green bed  
But dreams that lull the slumbers of the dead ?  
And shall we ghosts, the spectral vision o'er,  
Wake to some destiny unknown before ?  
Do pride and hate, despair and scorn, supply  
The enigma's word ? Is truth the one great lie ?  
How is it wisdom, vouched as Heaven's own law,  
Imparts no light, and but imposes awe ?  
And I, believing all I read, am yet  
With inward shadows daily more beset ?

And while I strive to tame my rebel will,  
Each sermon makes me more uncertain still ?  
Oh ! why does our good Mister Drum at church  
So often leave his meaning in the lurch,  
And always seem just going to find out  
He does not know the thing he talks about ?  
Shall not some great event, some special sign,  
To all distresses bring an end divine ?  
Nay, now perchance may not the skies prepare  
To kindle wondrous light in all the air,  
And one same hour, by Heaven's all-wise decree,  
Make Mogg our member and bring peace to me ?  
Ye rustling leaves, ye silent clouds above,  
Say, shall I meet again the man I love !  
Him seen by chance with whom some fleeting hours  
Sufficed to build in air such rainbow towers ;  
Whose gaze alone on earth could read my breast,  
And find his image slumbering there unguessed !  
More had she mused, but through the foliage broke  
A man, and clasped the damsel ere he spoke.  
—My Ann ! My own !—O Francis ! Francis, O !  
Don't, don't, dear Frank, you terrify me so !

In soft alternate speech the pastoral pair  
Talked unrestrained, and breathed Arcadian air,  
Each wondering at each response to find  
On this dull earth one such congenial mind.  
'Twas joy for him in her fresh heart to read  
The instinctive legend and the natural creed,  
The deep though formless faith, the love for all  
Fair things in one whom no false words enthrall ;  
And see the thickly-coming thoughts blush out,  
While the tongue faltered with a bashful doubt.  
And then from eyes that meet and thrilling hands,  
New life in each through all the soul expands.  
Thus Ann's inquiries, late so much amiss,  
Are solved by Love's reality of bliss.

And Frank in truth had much of weight to tell  
Beside his passion, and he told it well.  
For he had travelled far and wide, and scanned  
The images of Truth in many a land,  
And sat before the feet of teachers wise,  
And looked at thoughtless men with thoughtful eyes,  
And oft in common things had found a strain  
Of vital good that fiction apes in vain ;

For no bare desert is so waste as when  
With fraudulent mist it cheats the longing ken.

In Rome, the sculptured tomb of all the past,  
In German schools that train the soul's forecast,  
In stifling haunts of miserable throngs,  
And lonely wanderings 'mid his own dumb songs,  
In puzzling if divines can really mean  
The world is one great Birmingham machine,  
In fancying what would Socrates have said  
To Mister Newman? He what answer made?  
Frank's days had flown, till now the ripened man  
Was candidate for Aleborough and for Ann.

An hour had sped in mutual talk when they  
Broke off, but met again with short delay.  
'Twas breakfast-time, and Samuel Spark was by,  
And squinted courteously with either eye,  
Greeting his guest.—“My niece—Miss Ann”—he said,  
And tow'rd the blushing girl the stranger led.  
But Francis, smiling, spoke—“Already, sir,  
I've seen this lady, and have canvassed her:

I met her in the garden, and expressed  
My hope to have her vote and interest."—  
Gaunt Samuel grinned, and through the window showed  
A high dead wall, which faced his own abode,  
With bills adorned that told to earth and skies  
Of many a shop's "Tremendous Sacrifice."  
Amid these tragic shows, one huge placard  
Flamed fiercely Red with black inscription barred,  
And seemed to shriek aloud with tongues of fire,  
Mankind should vote for Francis Vane, Esquire!

Quoth Samuel, "Not for nothing, as you see,  
All night I laboured—Aleborough shall be free,  
And you by her support shall save the State.  
Now at the Bear my friends your coming wait;  
And we must go."—The meal despatched, Miss Ann  
Her curtsy made, and their new toils began.

But hark! at Samuel's door three fives two drums  
Four horns strike up "The Conquering Hero comes;"  
The pair advance, the music snorts before,  
Crowds throng around and swell the joyous roar;

And tattered men and boys of hatless heads  
Shout, "Long live Vane, and victory to the Reds!"  
That comet-like placard had roused the town,  
And filled their souls with Vane's immense renown.  
Hence grew the band, and hence the clamour swelled  
Till the blue skies the Reds' hoarse vaunt repelled;  
And Ann, while hearkening, thrilled with nobler life,  
Like some triumphant Roman Consul's wife.

Thus up High-street proceed they tow'rd the Bear,  
While taunts or greetings meet them everywhere,  
And everywhere cockades of red and blue,  
Like different sexes, part the world in two.  
But meanwhile Mogg and all the friends of Mogg  
Were gathered in the Lion all agog.  
They too had seen the writing on the wall,  
And feared it ruin while they termed it scrawl.  
All faces looked aghast but Lawyer Whisk's,  
Whose heart rose bolder still the worse the risks:  
A man whose pleasant, jolly, dexterous brain  
Played like the dolphin o'er the stormy main.  
Or as a rocket mounting through the skies  
When night is darkest most delights the eyes,

Or as a rat in some close corner pent  
Is fiercest then when death's most imminent,  
Or as Prometheus undespairing strove  
Against the will of all the gods and Jove ;  
So Whisk could meet with aspect firm and hard  
Frank Vane's approach and Samuel Spark's placard.

As close before the Lion passed the crowd,  
To quaking Mogg the lawyer cried aloud :  
" Though Spark's I own a very cunning fox,  
In spite of him before we seated Cox ;  
And I would wager in that crowd we find  
Much cry in front, but little sting behind."  
That said, he took a flag of heavenly blue,  
And from the window waved it full in view.  
Vane caught his eye, and laughed and bowed to him ;  
But Samuel's frown looked dangerously grim.

They scarce had passed, before the squire began  
To canvass Aleborough's voters man by man ;  
With smiling look and word, and promise bold,  
And dainty flatteries meet for young and old—



The tender kiss on squalling mouths impressed,  
The glistening ribbon for the damsel's breast,  
Grave talk with men how this poor empire thrives,  
The high-priced purchase from their prudent wives,  
The sympathising glance, the attentive ear,  
The shake-of-hand laboriously sincere,  
Hopes oft to see my friends at Harrier-hall,  
And fears that Russia will the world enthrall.

From house to house Mogg's well-fed body springs,  
Helped by his patriot spirit's ostrich wings,  
With Whisk and Small and Snooks, a faithful few  
More worth than all a Sultan's retinue.  
They point the path, the missing phrase supply,  
Oft prompt a name, and hint with hand or eye,  
Back each bold pledge, the fervid speech admire,  
And still add fuel to their leader's fire.

Behold them enter now a shop that shows  
Fat sheep and mighty beeves in plenteous rows ;  
Their errand told, their public zeal professed,  
The lady smiled on, and the question pressed,

The burly butcher like a two-legged ox,  
A Protestant in diet orthodox,  
Red-cheeked, flat-nosed, and with two worlds of chin,  
A Hercules that would have scorned to spin,  
Deep pondering scratched his head, and cried at last,  
“I hate those papists, that would make us fast :  
A man on Friday needs his wholesome food  
No less than Thursday ; hunger ’s never good,  
’Tain’t natural to men ; a mere brute beast  
Would have more sense than starve to please a priest :  
’Tis souperstition to make soup without  
Flesh meat !”—Said Peter Mogg, “ Beyond a doubt !  
That’s English sense, that’s Christian truth. Oh ! Strong,  
Truth ’s what we need ; the country ’s going wrong.  
Give me your vote, and in the House I’ll speak  
That speech of yours, and make the villains squeak.  
Ah, Whisk ! I value friends like Strong. How much  
The queen and country stand in need of such !”

Strong’s vote was promised, and the squire went on  
To the next door, the grocer Babington.—  
“ Well, Babington, my friend, how do ? how do ?  
*I’d have a word on politics with you.*

I stand for Aleborough upon public grounds,  
And this election through the world resounds,  
And will be felt at Moscow. May I hope  
To have your vote and fifty pounds of soap?  
Your voice is powerful and your soap the best ;  
My sense of both 's too great to be suppressed :  
The one may save the country from disgrace,  
The other brighten e'en the royal face.  
I am a man, my friend, who scorn disguise,  
And will confess I make a sacrifice ;  
But when the good of England 's in the scale—  
Pray weigh the soap—her claims on me prevail ;  
Though oft, no doubt, with sighs I shall recall  
The pensive hermitage of Harrier-hall."

" With me the question," Babington replied,  
" Is one where conscience is alone my guide.  
I ask, as loving freedom, why the free  
Pay such a tax on Sugar, Spice, and Tea ?  
We know all plants but one in Paradise  
Were Man's, and therefore Canes, and Teas, and Spice ;  
And he defies the Scriptures who retains  
*A tax on Tea, and Spice, and Sugar-canes.*

The point is one no Christian need discuss ;  
They were not taxed to Adam,—why to us ?  
Now, sir—Why, Susan, how that child does squall !—  
Weigh fifty pounds, white soap, for Harrier-hall—  
I ask, will you on no pretence relax  
Your vote against this slavish, sinful tax ?  
If so I'll give you mine ; but please observe,  
Once pledged to me, you must not try to swerve :  
I am a Christian, and disposed to think  
There is a God who will not always wink."

" I honour your religion," answered Mogg,  
" And hate a sceptic as the Jews a hog ;  
I wish that teas were cheaper than they are,  
And untaxed sugar would be sweeter far :  
And thus on all essential points agreed,  
We can hereafter with details proceed."

" Well, sir, I think we may, and hope to see  
An honest man old Aleborough's M.P.  
So there's my hand and vote. These figs, just come,  
I'm sure would please you. May I send a drum ?"—

“ By all means, send me three : full drums will cheer  
The mouth no less than empty ones the ear.”

Thus Mogg facetious played by head not rote  
His arduous part, and fixed a doubtful vote.

And now he crossed the street, and sought to gain,  
By blameless arts, the voice of Ephraim Chain,  
By trade a shoemaker, aged sixty-five,  
The queerest knottiest thorn-tree soul alive,  
With cross-cut face, and slow sagacious eye,  
A nose convex, and large-lipped mouth awry,  
And thin white hairs, that touched with quiet snow  
A forehead arched above and square below :  
But on his nose's utmost point, a wart  
Bore five long bristles vigorous and swart.  
His last upon his knees he seemed to spell,  
And his great head's deep umbrage o'er it fell,  
While grave he plied his awl, until the four  
The sunshine darkened, when he worked no more.  
He bowed and smiled, but leaving not his seat,  
Looked in himself shut up a man complete.

" Good Mister Chain, I'm come to ask your vote."

" I guessed as much ; there's some one else afloat."

" A stranger come on Aleborough by surprise."

" Strangers are sometimes angels in disguise."

" Sometimes bad angels ; but we'll make them flee."

" Such mostly stop until they've gained their fee."

" Perhaps you'll try to fit me with a boot ?"

" I'll make for any e'en a cloven foot."

" 'Tis chiefly as a neighbour and a friend,

That on your kind assistance I depend."

" All men on earth have found the Evil One

A next-door neighbour, and unkind to none."

" I hate professions loud, and false as fair,

But love my country which demands my care."

" Poor country ! But I hope your health holds out  
Against your feelings. You seem pretty stout."

" Why, thank you, yes, I'm well enough, but would  
Spend health, nay life, to do the people good."

" Pray don't, your life's too much : and after all,  
Were you the Member yet the skies might fall."

" I own it, Chain, with grief, and know that we  
Must bow to Heaven's inscrutable decree."

" I think I have heard that said before, but you  
No doubt discovered it. I guess 'tis true."

" As then we're thus agreed upon the whole,  
May I expect your suffrage at the poll?"

" That house is very bad ; we cannot spare  
A soul so pure to be corrupted there."

" 'Tis not so much your vote I would engage,  
As win the approval of a man so sage."

" Sage ! why, sir, I'm a fool who think the wise  
Show best their sense by not believing lies."

" That's true, and all the town agree that Chain  
Has ten men's wit in his proverbial brain."

" Ah ! sir, you're working hard to make black white ;  
I too have work, so please to give me light."

So spoke the indomitable voice, and Mogg,  
Downcast and puzzled, left the cynic dog.  
But seldom thus the pliant Squire in vain  
Attempted Aleborough's doubtful votes to gain  
By ready speech and vow, by flattery soft,  
Sometimes by gifts, by promised favours oft,  
He prospered well, and many a purchase made,  
*That helped at once the Cause and quickened Trade.*

A stuffed jackdaw upon an upper shelf  
Now caught his fancy, now a cup of delf ;  
He paid three pounds for each. A cat that tore  
His fingers cost him ten, a rabbit more.  
Two chests of oranges, a watering-pot,  
And three old German volumes in a lot ;  
Five Bibles, Man's Whole Duty, and three dice,  
Fifteen old almanacks, and two white mice ;  
Three hundred novels of High Life, and six  
New Epics, and a waggon-load of bricks ;  
A suit of armour, and an empty cask,  
A Prayer-book bound in velvet, and black mask ;  
A bishop's worn-out wig, an infant's caul,—  
Were paid for down, and sent to Harrier-hall.





# THE ELECTION.



## BOOK III.



### BOOK III.

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WHILE Mogg and Whisk their hopeful canvass pressed  
By loud profession and by bland request,  
Frank Vane and Spark took counsel at the Bear,  
Among the grave committee summoned there ;  
Of whom two only now in song survive,  
The surgeon Harris, and the stationer Clive.

The one, a jovial, busy, talking man,  
Whose phrase on human progress always ran ;  
Who, though not young, with all the zeal of youth,  
Believed that science yields prophetic truth,  
And thought the past was all a misty dream,  
Till Reason poured on us a cloudless beam,  
When superstition's nightmare melted off,  
And left the cheerful spirit free to scoff :  
A man whose notion of Eternal Power  
Stretched not beyond the nutshell of an hour ;

Who, rash and open, quick humane and shrewd,  
Despised mankind, but loved the multitude ;  
And prized their dull and homely natures more  
Than aught the wise proclaim, the good adore.

His compeer Clive, a stationer, who sold  
All paper, blank or printed, new or old,  
Maintained that books, cheap, many, clear, and smart,  
Are steeds of fire to draw man's lagging cart ;  
That manuals and gazettes are new-found wings,  
On which our earthly being heavenward springs ;  
That Truth's a desert, where the sands are facts,  
And Faith's one temple is a shop of tracts.  
A sharp dissenter he, who held it best  
To have some creed, if doubted, yet professed ;  
Young, apt, and active, ready at his trade,  
And sure that Thought can by machines be made,  
And some new patent system will impart  
The noblest knowledge to the paltriest heart.

With these were others, plain, fair, surly folk,  
Who kept their shops, and felt each tax a yoke.

The one was light, and cool, if not profane,  
And held authority a tyrant's chain;  
A zealot one, in whom 'twere ill to scorn  
The angel blazing 'mid the bush of thorn.  
Among them, some were quick, some stagnant heads,  
Kind hearts, or cold, but all decided Reds.  
Though less by conscience than by custom strong,  
They most of them distinguished right from wrong;  
And were not given to theft, or e'en to lies,  
Save those which moral cooks as truth disguise.

Their plans arranged, and banished fear and doubt,  
Vane Spark and Clive and Harris issued out.  
They too began their canvass, but the Muse  
Conceals in her deep mind that morning's news.

Then passed three days in conference grave and long,  
And empty speeches to the emptier throng;  
And now and then the truant Francis spent  
A stolen half-hour on love's long argument,  
Wherein it was his hint to speak at large  
Of all that haunts weird fancy's wide sea-marge,

Of Eastern caravans from earth's first years,  
Through ages wandering, led by magic seers,  
Of Attic temples, where green wreaths reward  
The genial toils of hero, sage, and bard;  
Of all great visions in the eternal sky,  
O'er time's brown ruins hung unchangeably;  
Of stars, flowers, pictures, poems, arts divine,  
And bliss drunk deep from nature's heavenly wine;  
Of worlds unknown and feared, yet loved the more,  
That faintly gleam on Being's utmost shore;  
And now and then the fingers met by chance,  
Or the eyes lingered in the encountering glance,  
Till silence, like a thin and trembling veil,  
Fell o'er them, and they felt their cheeks grow pale.

In these electric hours was one, when Ann  
Desired to hear his tale, who thus began:—  
“A merchant's son, in London born and bred,  
On that wide sea my boyish sails I spread,  
And learnt to stem those tides without a shore,  
Still rushing endless as Niagara's roar.  
There seethe, 'mid palaces gaols churches marts,  
*A million human faces tongues and hearts;*

There toil of hand and brain that might suffice  
To make earth heaven, but earns a slavish price ;  
And painful thought but heaps the daily feast  
Of drunken ease, a god that serves a beast ;  
While clear calm reason, and the pure delight  
Of graceful arts, and the free spirit's flight,  
Fail in that hell of pain and pleasure. There  
I dwelt a boy, and breathed life's morning air :  
And in the lore of Greece and Rome I found  
A cell, thence looking on the tumult round,  
Whose wonders all to me were midnight shows,  
That lightning flashes doubtfully disclose.

“ My father had a friend of wealth and taste,  
By knowledge quickened, with refinement graced ;  
A banker, high in credit, proud to hold  
His place by mind and manners more than gold ;  
In England's highest circles known, and there  
Made welcome by the noble and the fair ;  
And in those lofty regions where, no doubt,  
Good manners reign with goodness—or without,  
His habits, fancy, feelings, were at home  
No less than mine, in ancient Greece and Rome,



And still he wooed the condescending pride  
That lured him still, but never satisfied.

“ The house that Bowyer lived in, where I spent  
Long days in youthful joy’s bewilderment,  
Stood by the Thames, and rose before the view  
As if sweet music on the eyesight grew,  
While those green lawns and old umbrageous trees  
Were haunts where Fancy lingered at her ease,  
And all the building’s light Italian style  
Seemed like a lovely face to think and smile.  
Within its walls, in many a bright saloon,  
Each costliest art had added boon to boon—  
But vainly thus I loiter on a way  
That moves beneath my feet, and will not stay ;  
My tale must onward. ’Twas not wealth alone,  
With all its treasures won from every zone,  
Nor Arts that lift the soul in thoughtful joy,  
Alone to Bowyer’s roof allured the boy.

“ He had a daughter—had—’tis vain to pause—  
This only child—I blush without a cause.

Her fate is sad—I never did her wrong—  
I knew her early, and I loved her long,  
And she deserved my love—as fair and good  
As ever bloomed to gentle womanhood.  
Emma was mild and tuneful as the light  
That meets the stars when day declines to night,  
A yielding creature, delicate and frail,  
Plaintive and sweet, love's very nightingale,  
And not its Phoenix all of Eastern fire :  
Her strength was small, alas! her destiny dire.  
Her father knew our wish, and though his aim  
For her was loftier, yet he did not blame ;  
Our years alone postponed our marriage-day,  
And we filled up with love the forced delay.

“ Upon the morn that made me twenty-one  
We hoped the dawning of our life's true sun ;  
But storm came on, and all was dark despair :  
My father died, and left a beggared heir.  
His wealth, once great, in trade had vanished all,  
Nor he himself survived his fortune's fall ;  
And I, unskilled to help, could only mourn  
His sudden fate, and feel myself forlorn.

“ Now poor, and therefore shunned, I met with looks  
That tried the wisdom I had learnt in books ;  
And hard indeed their coldness, but secure  
In Emma’s love, I could the worst endure.  
The rest is bad. In Bowyer’s altered air  
I tasted poison lurking subtly there.  
When first we met, constrained he seemed and dry ;  
Of kindness talked, but turned away his eye,  
And said his daughter had been asked to spend  
A month in Yorkshire with her mother’s friend.  
Once more I saw him, and compelled his pride  
To speak what else in silence would have died.

“ I must not think—’twas too absurd, he said—  
Of one whom nobles might contend to wed.  
The obvious reasons, overborne so long  
By mere good feeling, all must own are strong.  
As want of high connexion, long descent,  
And all that makes bare merit eminent,  
The youth of both, on which uncertain soil  
To plan his building were a waste of toil,  
And now this loss of means, that spoke aloud  
*The will of Heaven* from fate’s dark thunder-cloud.

In short, his views were fixed, and he withal  
Could not advise, but would suggest Bengal,  
And thought his interest might avail to gain  
Such place for me as few by toil attain.  
In that rich world my life, though now so blank,  
Might well be stamped with honour, nay with rank.

“Indignant and confused, I felt the scorn  
Due to a man who would my soul suborn,  
But only said—‘Reverse the lot of each,  
And I would still disdain the rules you teach.’

“‘No doubt,’ he answered, ‘you’re in love, and young;  
I twice your age, and not by passion stung :  
But had you wealth, and made yourself the prize  
Of some poor beauty, could I deem you wise ?  
In twenty years, believe me, ’twill be hard  
To doubt the truths your feelings now discard.’

“‘Alas!’—I sighed—‘if Life be thus a sieve  
That Faith runs through, it will be hard to live.’—

And so we parted. I believed it base  
To force on Emma's heart her sire's disgrace,  
And did not write to her. Too timid she,  
Her years too few, her fate too little free :  
But still I staid in England, dared not cope  
Against despair, still tracked the ghost of hope,  
And still this various world of living power  
Was one snow-waste, and she the only flower.

“ Nor long she bloomed for me. I read one day  
That she had given her hand to Viscount Bray.  
What first I felt were hard to tell,—how nigh  
To madness reeled the brain and longed to die :  
But when restored at last to clearer thought,  
I conned the lesson weeks of pain had taught ;  
I found calamity had left me still  
The world and God, a head and heart and will.

“ My soul abhorred to mingle in the strife  
For wealth, which gained besots our English life ;  
Nor yet would I receive from bounty's hand  
Those helps to work it should itself command,

Content not much of outward good to win,  
If only thus I could be rich within ;  
For custom still our better purport mars,  
And makes us fire-flies when we might be stars ;  
And while we seek what others call success,  
By safe routine, we sink to worthlessness.

“To me had still been dear the silent art  
Beneath whose touch bright shapes to being start,  
The unchanging forms in many-coloured grace,  
Each breathing, gazing, never moving face,  
And all the fleeting beauty Nature shows  
Fixed in enduring lines and mild repose.

“In this serene and blameless toil I now  
Composed my breast and smoothed an aching brow.  
I changed my name ; my task from day to day  
Procured me food, and sped the hours away.  
Myself among the poor, I thus could learn  
What thoughts are theirs who eat but what they earn ;  
And with deep pity oft I longed to give  
More than mere life to those who hardly live.

“ But for the rich I wrought, for them displayed  
Their fondled earth in happiest hues arrayed,  
And had to fit my skill’s obsequious dance  
To the cracked pipe of golden ignorance ;  
And thus the sense upon me daily grew  
How fashion still proclaims the trivial new,  
And ’mid imperial amplitude of things  
How weakly drags the soul on broken wings,  
If no great aim, no broad ennobling light  
Stirs, lifts, imbues, inspires the convertite.

“ But still I wrought with humble care, and gained  
Enough for need, though nought for ease remained.  
A man I knew, an honest man—’tis much  
When one who’s poor himself can meet with such—  
Who to the rich for me and others sold  
Our idle wares, and duly paid the gold,  
Keeping our gathered drawings in a book  
Exposed to view of all who cared to look.  
But here one day I found a little stain  
Upon a drawing, like a drop of rain.

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The rest of mine, the dealer said, were gone,  
And she who bought them left by chance this one.  
The lady had been there the previous day  
And would no doubt return with small delay.

“ Within the neighbouring room I took my stand,  
And thrilling watched, already half unmanned,  
Though then with little cause. I had to fear  
Only the mystery of a woman’s tear.  
She came, our glances met, and Emma’s eyes  
Caught mine with blissful first, then dread surprise.  
She shrieked, she swooned ; I left her on a seat,  
And rushed away, no more—not once to meet.

“ I knew myself a man too weak to stay  
Where we could ever cross each other’s way,  
And therefore fled from England to the shore  
Whence our wild fathers plied their barks before,  
And where the manly genius of our race  
Still guards and hallows its old dwelling-place.

In that calm German land I still pursued  
My former art in wandering solitude ;



Though often o'er my heart would steal a dream  
Of Emma's love and mar my pencil's theme,  
And with abated zeal and wearier hand  
Dim Fancy laboured at the will's command ;  
And while her fainter images expired,  
Reflection woke, affirmed, arranged, inquired,  
Till in the Schools of philosophic thought  
More than in beauty's halls my spirit wrought.  
I brooded thus until it seemed the ark  
Of all mankind were speculation's bark,  
And notions baked in metaphysic fires  
Were all the bricks and bread that life requires ;  
And yet among those German wizards Truth  
Still wears, methinks, the promise of her youth ;  
And though their meerschaums much the nose provoke,  
I doubt if all their doctrines end in smoke.

“ But I had other work ; and that first heat  
Of wing abated, I resumed my feet,  
And found I could not turn from Action's road  
To make the tents of Thought my last abode,  
And loftiest knowledge could not now suppress  
*A qualm of grief and gale of restlessness.*

“ Though all beside was clear, what I must do  
Lay hid, my life a maze without a clue.  
A painful impulse drove me forth alone  
To where from Furca’s ice-mound breaks the Rhone.  
O’er fields of rainbow glass and frozen piles,  
In Urseren’s vale and Grimsel’s torn defiles,  
Where gentians blue and rhododendrons warm  
Cling up the folds of many an Alpine storm,  
To that dark lake, the “ Waters of the Dead,”  
And by the roaring Aar, alone I fled,  
A wandering spectre, and confronted there  
The hard unfruitful presence of despair.

“ I found the waste, where Silence linked with Cold  
Dead Nature their great mother’s corpse enfold,  
Had yet a milder aspect than the life  
Of one whose heart is vexed with inward strife,  
And man has streams of sorrow worse by far  
Than fiercest floods that grind the rocks of Aar.  
Who tracks our poison’d fountain’s waves will know  
To what vain ocean of deceit they flow.  
What gains the astronomer who blames the skies?  
The man who loathes our human destinies?

Or is the hunger wise, that scorning bread  
As not ambrosia, feeds on dust instead ?

“ My state was then as wretched as a boy’s  
Who sulks because the stars will not be toys ;  
And I made ghastly faces at the moon  
Which would not come to be my plate and spoon,  
And thought, like Werther, Manfred, and the rest,  
I must in poor old Nature’s name protest,  
Must play the devil, wanting tail and horns,  
But fierce and full of gentlemanly scorns,  
And mourn the fact that even is not odd,  
And all God’s creatures cannot each be God.

“ One day I stood above a dark abyss,”—  
But hark ! for scarce had Francis uttered this,  
When entered Molly, Samuel’s upper maid,  
And—“ Sir, my master asks for you,” she said.  
Ann’s eager look was darkened, and she felt  
As at a play, when most the affections melt,  
If chance cuts off the gas, the witchery dies,  
And leaves the high-wrought soul in black surprise.

And now to Francis, Samuel Spark made known  
The writ was come, the battle-trumpet blown,  
And on the morrow morning they must face  
Their valiant foes in Aleborough's market-place.  
And some declare the sun and stars all shook  
With envious awe at Vane's unshrinking look.



# **THE ELECTION.**



## **BOOK IV.**



## BOOK IV.

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At last the Election hastened on its way,  
For here was come the Nomination Day.  
Ten public-houses opening for the Blues,  
Their floods of moral influence diffuse :  
The Pig and Whistle, Gridiron, Tiger, Lamb,  
Fox, Mitre, Bushel, Hop-pole, Dog, and Ram.  
And each of seven its blameless nectar sheds  
To nerve the spirits of the valiant Reds :  
The Cat and Snuffers, Chequers, Boar, and Tun ;  
Three Kings, Black Boy, and thirst-exciting Sun.  
The hustings in the market-place were set,  
The Mayor looked big, the bands were made to sweat ;  
Opposing standards filled the sky with beams  
Of various light, and ribbons flowed in streams.

When morning dawned, then met the knots and groups,  
And *bandying gibes* and nicknames, songs and whoops,



They gradual filled the battle-field, till came  
The thick processions big with beer and fame,  
Their flags above them, music in the van,  
War in the looks of each bold partisan;  
While silent, grave, considerate, and proud,  
The chiefs of either troop surveyed the crowd.

But when upon the hustings first was seen  
Each mighty leader with the Mayor between,  
Then rose a shout so vast and passionate,  
As if to shake the sun from his high state.  
“Hurrah for Mogg!” resounding cracks the skies;  
“Hurrah for Vane!” with equal rage replies;  
And ’mid the tumult firm of soul was he  
Who did not feel as in a storm at sea,  
While the grey clouds their quiet aspects bent  
Upon that morning’s huge arbitrement.

Then first was Mogg proposed and well described,  
A man no king on earth had ever bribed,  
A genius fit, as all his friends proclaim,  
To raise yet higher even Aleborough’s fame.

"Hear! hear!" the enthusiast throng renewed their shriek,  
And scarce would pause when Mogg began to speak.

"You know me all, and of myself I say  
No more than this—we've met before to-day.  
But of my principles I speak, because  
In uttering them no honest man will pause:  
For truth is like the sun; and where it shines,  
No gentleman can cherish dark designs.

"I will affirm with pride in face of all,  
I love my country and attend its call:  
We often hear some new-discovered spot  
Is better than our own, but I think not.  
Old England does for me; I never wish  
To hear strange words, or eat a foreign dish,—  
The names taste dirty. But 'tis my belief  
That angels would sing hymns to praise Roast Beef."

Then cried a chimney-sweep, "I say, you squire,  
If you don't drink port-wine, your look's a liar!"  
"True, thank you for the hint! I'll drink your health;  
I sometimes do take wine, but not by stealth.

A heavy tax on every glass is paid,  
And each new bottle swells our foreign trade ;  
And in this way, I own, I do my best  
To help our great Commercial Interest ! ”

Loud rang the shouts at Mogg’s alert reply,  
And the long laugh went pealing through the sky.  
“ There ’s one point more that must not be forborne,  
My friends ! I’m not at all for Foreign Corn.  
Let those who like it go abroad to eat  
French rolls ; to me a quartern loaf is sweet ;  
And while my shilling helps the farmer here,  
I will not try to fatten thin Mounseer.  
It is no doubt a taking cry to bawl  
‘ Cheap Bread ! ’ But what’s so dear as none at all ?  
As milliners perhaps the French are good ;  
But I’ll not trust them for my daily food,  
Lest when they see our bakers’ empty shelves,  
They keep their masty flour to feed themselves,  
And poor John Bull, who left his fields unsown,  
Must kneel to them for crumbs, or munch a stone,  
And dying children’s cries our bosoms wrench,  
And beg in vain for victuals from the French.”

All Aleborough shuddered at the scene he drew,  
And e'en Red faces looked a little Blue,  
Till Nature, glorying in so wise a son,  
Cried out, "Hurrah for Peter! Mogg, well done!"  
And many a Red, in that enraptured burst,  
Hurrahed the man whom yesterday they cursed.  
Vane also laughing, swelled the general roar,  
And when it sank, suggested—"One cheer more!"  
On Mogg's large face the inspiring moment rushed,  
And one, less firmly modest, would have blushed;  
But soon again he clothed his aged sense  
In youthful feeling's brightest eloquence,  
Like a new wig on an old coachman's head,  
Or genuine pinchbeck covering weightiest lead.  
"I've never been abroad, because I know  
That all the world no land like ours can show;  
The bravest men, the prettiest girls on earth,  
Adorn the country where I had my birth,  
And Nature strove to make this isle a place  
Fit for the noblest of the human race.  
Nay, though she often since has tried her hand,  
She ne'er has matched what here of old she planned;

For simple truth, and sober mother wit,  
And modest worth, no country rivals it ;  
For were it otherwise, 'tis plain that we  
Should have superiors : Friends, it cannot be !  
At even our old women, when abroad,  
The proudest kings on earth are overawed ;  
And as they find they cannot buy nor steal  
This country, you may fancy what they feel.

“ I own I'm sorry for that Russian Czar,  
Obliged, poor man ! to live away so far ;  
And to drive back the wolves and bears again,  
He keeps in arms five hundred thousand men.  
But always being shut in ice and snows,  
He never heard of England, I suppose ;  
For else he'd fix at Aleborough, like us,  
And feel his frozen crown ridiculous.

“ I love the Constitution, yet maintain  
'Tis far too mild tow'rds all who dare complain.  
These men would eat their grandmother alive,  
As if such food could make a Christian thrive ;

And she, dear lady ! rightly might devour  
The traitors first, but they're a dish too sour.  
Our boast is 'British Freedom ;' no one here  
Needs learn, work, dress, or eat from slavish fear.  
The rich their daily joint in freedom carve ;  
The poorest men in equal freedom starve ;  
And he who naked in a ditch expires,  
Yet dies with freedom like his freeborn sires.  
Be this our pride ! and be it ours to guard  
The Sacred Rights that fools would fain discard.  
I ask, has earth a spot where laws abound  
So many, curious, ample, and profound ?  
Where lawyers never strain their private wit  
To ask what's reason, but proclaim what's writ ?  
Where else are all men equal, save that one  
Has lands and houses, and another none ?—  
A difference betwixt the mean and great,  
Which Heaven itself forbids to violate.

“ I also love the Church that claims our awe  
Tow'rds holy Truth by force of Statute Law,



And helps free grace to gain the soul's assent,  
And cleanse our sins by Act of Parliament :  
A loyal Church, that keeps the rich and poor  
Duly apart, nor blends the lord and boor.  
'Tis sweet to witness pews nor mean nor scant  
For those who pay—free seats for those who can't ;  
To hear a Priest too polished to be proud,  
A gentleman set up to teach the crowd ;  
Not puffed by rabble votes to Wisdom's chair,  
But by superior judgment settled there,  
And so discreetly teaching all to chuse  
The path their betters fain would have them use.

“ Thus in a phrase but seldom heard of late,  
My thoughtful friends, I stick to Church and State ;  
The State, that guards our rights, and lives, and cash,  
And scorns all change as impudent and rash ;  
The Church, that one day out of every seven  
Throws wide the turnpike between us and Heaven :  
Such help our ancestors to all supply,  
Alike to those who live and those who die ;  
And none who trust in British Laws can miss  
*Terrestrial freedom and eternal bliss.*”

Soft sank his utterance, like a mermaid song,  
That closing roused the tempest of the throng,  
Whose bosoms, pierced by each rhetoric stroke,  
At last in shouts of generous passion broke ;  
Blue patriots all, with souls of azure fire,  
Hurrahing half for fun, and half for hire.  
Slow ceased the tumult, when, the forms gone through,  
And Vane declared a mortal matched by few,  
Prepared if champions of her own were scarce  
In Aleborough's cause to fight the universe.  
The younger candidate stood forth to speak,  
With a light blush upon his ruddy cheek ;  
In black frock-coat and neckcloth, waistcoat buff,  
And trousers drab,—no fop, but dressed enough,—  
He looked indeed, which some a fault may deem,  
Of flesh and blood, and not of pink ice-cream—  
The resolute kind of man, whose hand or head  
Would anywhere have earned him honest bread.

He said, "I know not what's our task to-day,  
If all things prosper thus, and none decay.  
Elections, Parliaments, the time's turmoil,  
*Proclaim aloud that something needs our toil.*



If human lives go smooth, like stars above,  
And teach no lesson but of peace and love,  
Say then what further wish impels the wise?  
Why myriads oft at each new watch-word rise?  
If all, as children sporting through the day,  
Might sink at night to dream sweet hours away,  
How frantic then the cost at which we nurse  
Our party rage, our mutual scorn and curse!  
But all men feel, from beggar up to peer,  
The vaunt delusive, and the pain sincere :  
And though to Britain fame and wealth are given,  
The Heart and Head have not so nobly thriven.

“To me it seems among us much is wrong ;  
The weak too wretched, and too proud the strong.  
My voice would grant to all an ampler scope  
Of rights and duties, and would teach them hope ;  
Unreasoned Custom’s bonds would fain unbind,  
And yield more bread to body and to mind.  
It is, no doubt, a land where wealth bestows  
Whate’er enjoyment self-indulgence knows,  
Where e’en the trader dares to claim by right,  
*Both much to vaunt, and much that gives delight ;*

But still the Many, poor, despised, and rude,  
Hate those they feed, and who deny them food.  
'Tis thus our Roads are still by all confessed  
For those who travel smoothest, hardest, best :—  
I've sometimes wondered, if the broken stones  
Had voices, would Macadam hear no groans.

“ And yet 'tis clear, that many a heart refined  
Esteems it graceful luxury to be kind,  
With ring-decked hand confers the loaf, the book,  
And feasts on sordid misery's thanking look ;  
Exults to play the unquestioned lordly friend,  
To give, to patronise, to condescend,  
And is amused too pleasantly to heed  
That thus we more degrade the want we feed.

“ Oh! would some angel from the skies proclaim  
With trumpet-blast and oracles of flame,  
That we do worse than little while we hold  
Our brethren debtors to our bounty sold !  
It is their one great human right to be,  
Though bound by love, from mere compulsion free,

With none, save God, to fashion them at will,  
And say—‘ My Creature, thou my law fulfil !’  
’Tis ignorant Pride that fain would hear men crave  
Those alms that starve, those lessons that enslave,  
And feel its gaudy virtue’s fit reply  
In sorrow’s grateful shame-tormented sigh.  
If any bear a heart that can revere,  
Yet pity his own nature’s hapless peer,  
Let him his high benignant scorn disown,  
And tell the man—‘ Thy soul is thine alone ;  
And if it e’er shall rise to strength divine,  
Though others aid, the struggle must be thine :  
Strive, hope, advance, compare, touch, taste, and think,  
And for thyself from life’s full fountain drink !’

“ At once behold, ’mid rags, and crimes, and tears,  
The brutal bondman start with wondering ears,  
To catch some better sound than hard rebuke,  
Or pitying phrase, from Bishop, Judge and Duke :  
And bare no more of outward things, the breast  
May glow with warm affections unrepressed ;  
But in the rags of misery feeling fails  
*Stunted and nipt, while want’s drear frost prevails.*

The wretch who trembles o'er the chilling grate  
Among his children, well may curse their fate,  
And say—' To us the rich men's wealth belongs ;  
The tyrant's joys are theirs, and ours the wrongs !'  
Will Christmas doles and alms with scorn bestowed,  
Make him a friend whom thoughts like those corrode ?  
Ah ! no ; your gift too stern conditions clog :  
He is your brother, deem him not your dog.  
Your bounty kindly meant but feeds the flame  
That burns within, and barbs disgust with shame.  
To free a man from evil's bonds accurst,  
Why need we stupify or starve him first ?

“ In fine, had I the dreadful power to plan  
For these great realms the destinies of man,  
It were my one sole task to disenthral  
The fettered limbs and hearts benumbed of all,  
To teach the poor that richer men are not  
The eternal gods and fiends who shape their lot ;  
But One, alike the Lord of rich and poor,  
Will bless true toil, and make right paths secure.  
But thus no more must crooked laws deprive  
Of *needful food* the throngs by whom we thrive ;

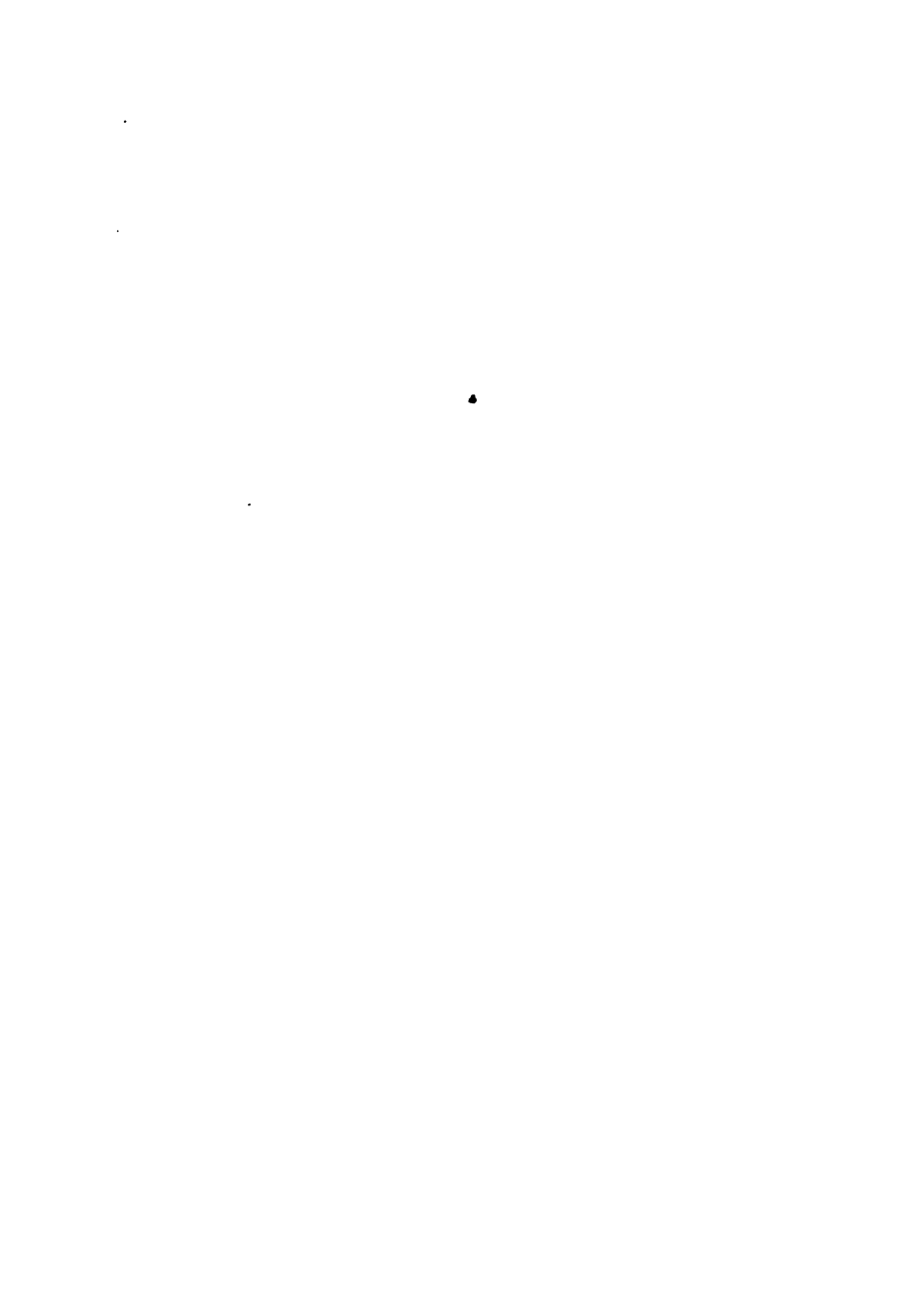
And thus in every cottage must the boy  
Early be trained to thought, and hope, and joy,  
Till Plenty drops its manna from the skies,  
And Knowledge makes the poorest freely wise.

“ Oh ! England, mighty mother of us all !  
What misery rages round the bestial stall  
Where feed thy favoured herd ; what terrors crouch  
Behind thy gilded luxury’s curtained couch ;  
And with what false unstable souls do we  
Launch summer boats upon a wintry sea !  
How fondly full are spread the feasts of Wealth !  
What sullen Famine gleans their crumbs by stealth !  
And with what self-complacent smile do those  
Who feel no pain exclaim—‘ Oh ! blest repose !’  
Till now the fat kine eating up the lean,  
Reverse the dream, but not the woe foreseen.

“ I see my country’s greatness, know ’tis more  
Than all earth’s kingdoms e’er possessed before.  
With golden prows she loads the Northern Seas,  
Evokes new empires at the Antipodes,

Renews her youth amid the opening West,  
And sees her image on the East impressed ;  
While plough, and ship, and mine, and engine dread—  
Mad toil of fire and water, hand and head—  
Pour riches forth in cataracts whose sound  
Can e'en a writhing nation's groans confound.  
Lift we these monstrous powers to nobler aims,  
Bid morning light arise from dusky flames ;  
Be what we can, and strengthen England's throne  
By Thought and Right, not Arms and Gold alone ;  
And so mankind at last may contemplate  
A people wise and good, no less than great."

At length broke out the much-bewildered crowd,  
" Fudge—Gammon—He's a parson"—pealed aloud.  
With rage and shame, Spark trembled at the speech,  
And whispered, " Hang it ! did you come to preach ?"  
While Whisk exclaimed to Mogg, " Five score to five,  
We win ! The man impales himself alive."



# THE ELECTION.



BOOK V.





BOOK V.

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IN doleful dumps as e'er on worst surprise  
Made Rome's great Senate doubt their destinies,  
When Hannibal's fierce cloud was seen to roll  
Flames from Mount Alban o'er the Capitol,  
Now sat the Red Divan : and 'mid them Spark  
With tenfold wrath and gloom was lowering dark,  
While Vane talked, laughed, and idled, unconcerned  
At all the wonderment his speech had earned.

Spark long was silent, but at length the rage  
Within him beastlike broke its iron cage.  
“ Nay, sir, this morning's work is past a jest ;  
Damnation, sir ! I say, we all protest ;  
By Heaven, and if you will—but I'll not swear,  
Though scarce a Quaker lady could forbear.  
I say no more ; the best of cards all gone,  
I wash my hands—a thing I've seldom done.”

A message stopped the rest, and Vane amused  
Spoke not, while Samuel a note perused.  
Then starting up, the lawyer cried, "Good day !  
An urgent call admits of no delay.  
I leave you, gentlemen, and cannot fix  
An hour, but hope I shall be back by six :  
Till then excuse me, Mister Vane ; I fear  
The best of heads could now do nothing here,  
But we may fail with decency. In short,  
We *must* buy off the cursed Gazette's report."

And so he took his leave. What words were they  
That conjured Samuel Spark at once away ?  
" Dear sir, upon affairs of pressing need,  
I wish to see you with immediate speed.  
I wait your coming—yours, Diana Spence.  
P.S. Pray use your utmost diligence."  
And who was this impatient dame ? Her style  
Denotes her rich, nor is it stained with guile ;  
For she had large and fair estates, that came  
To her as heiress of an ancient name,  
A Campion born and married to a Spence,  
*Who swelled yet more his widow's opulence.*

Her seat of Norton Manor had allowed  
A soul less chastened to be somewhat proud,  
And one less rich by lands and stock within,  
Had found her outward wealth a snare to sin.

Now Spark, supreme o'er all the lady's dues,  
Fines, leases, farms, received her revenues,  
Her man of law and business, upon whom,  
As her vizier, hung all her tenants' doom ;  
Her strong familiar spirit, smooth and grave,  
That none dared call though some believed a knave.  
For still to Mistress Spence all voices paid  
Her just applause, in one long serenade :  
And her high fame, and Samuel's dreaded power,  
Made every murmuring heart its groans devour.

She well became her fortune ; handsome yet,  
With lineless brow, smooth cheeks, and hair of jet ;  
A face, that plainly told twoscore of years,  
Had scarcely brought her eyes as many tears.  
A girl accomplished graceful calm and fair,  
She seemed a pure wax-light in Grosvenor-square,

Until beneath St. George's fateful porch  
The virgin taper blazed as Hymen's torch ;  
A wife in highest vogue, correct, admired,  
In lauding whom the virtuous never tired ;  
And who, could worth be caught from looks and tones,  
Had done more good than all the martyrs' bones.  
In fine, a pattern, wont in all to show  
Her moral right to every good below.

Once by a concert-singer's drapery brushed,  
The spotless heart with indignation blushed,  
And dropping on the floor the cashmere woof,  
Preferred self-sacrifice to just reproof.  
But free from bigot pride without a pang,  
She heard the songs of love the culprit sang ;  
And when, at last, she left the shawl behind,  
These words alone expressed her hallowed mind,—  
“ It cost me fifty guineas. I declare  
The law should make such people take more care.”

Mild on the surface, though severe within,  
She never frowned except at vulgar sin ;

But still with soul of brass pursued her way,  
Nor e'en one hasty moment went astray.  
And she was cold to every wrong desire,  
As Alpine ice-peak to the lightning's fire ;  
While, not so circumspect, the neighbouring tree  
Admits the blaze and dies like Semele.  
In short, Diana shone on life's frail stage  
The ideal *Proper Person* of her age ;  
Her life was blazon'd *Proper*, and it bore  
Additions due of *argent* and of *or*.  
The goddess of Propriety could find  
No fitter Sibyl to convert mankind ;  
And as to blaming aught Diana did,  
Or daring anything by her forbid,  
One might almost as well maintain that we  
Can learn at all from lands beyond the sea,  
Or e'en that truth is not for man below,  
A wine once made, but like the vine must grow.  
The *Christian Year* of poems pleased her most :  
Of journals nothing but the *Morning Post*.

Nature had blessed this mortal excellence  
With *one sole child*, Fitzurse Fitztalbot Spence.

Now grown to years mature, at least to those  
When lip and chin an actual beard disclose ;  
A youth of warm nineteen, who now began  
To call himself with pride a *Cambridge man*.  
He wore a hat instead of cap, as sprung  
From Canute through some line by bards unsung ;  
But much had Canute wondered to foresee  
The kind of offspring his would come to be.  
Had caverned Scald, by force of Runic rhyme,  
Called up the phantom shapes of future time,  
And shown the Fellow-commoner's repast,  
The undaunted sea-king would have looked aghast.  
In those gay rooms, not skulls of bulls for chairs,  
Nor horns of mead delight the Northmen's heirs,  
But dishes dressed with Frankish Cookery's art,  
And Gallic wines their gentle fires impart ;  
While Anglia's young patricians cultivate  
A taste for dining as becomes the great.

Fitzurse besides, though no romantic fool,  
Had learnt some truths in nature's open school ;  
And once with smiles, and something more, repaid  
*His lady-mother's smiling dairy-maid.*

But now 'twas worse than this : and scarce had Spark  
Approached the hall-door, through the forest park,  
Before the lady met him, and then soon  
The two were shut in her superb saloon.

“ Well, sir !” she cried, “ a pretty tale is this !  
I little thought your niece an artful miss,  
Intent on catching lovers far above  
Her rank in life—I hate the name of love :  
By knaves as something plausible professed,  
The fool’s delusion, and the wise man’s jest :  
And for myself, I never—but enough,  
You know as well as I ’tis idle stuff ;  
A carnal toy, like school-boys’ tops and kites,  
Or dolls of girls, fallen nature’s vain delights ;  
And Heaven might well to sudden woe devote  
A world, where sinners on each other dote.  
Ah ! Spark, we know it well ; there’s nought but shame  
And death in man, as all the saved proclaim ;  
And this bright earth, by folly loved so well,  
Is but a showy pleasure-ground of hell.  
But thus our lot is cast, and howsoe’er  
The *spirit* groans for peace denied us here,



We must perform our duties, e'en with pain,  
Not always, as we trust, endured in vain.  
And therefore to return—I speak with grief.  
And Spark, 'tis you must give my heart relief;  
The mischief seems incredible, I own,  
A deep disgrace in former times unknown.  
O! could the Champions, could the Spences, hear  
The tale I tell, their very bones would sneer;  
Fitzurse Fitztalbot Spence, my only son,  
And oh! my heir! our house is all undone."

She paused a moment, and her heedful friend  
Inquired what help his feeble powers could lend;  
And then at last, with sighs, the dame confessed  
The fatal secret labouring in her breast.

At Aleborough, by chance, not long before  
Fitzurse had followed Ann to Samuel's door,  
And seen her enter; thus had learnt her name,  
And brought to Norton House her beauty's fame.  
Since that it seemed that he would fain trepan  
His honoured mother to invite Miss Ann;

By hints at dinner, much would recommend  
The cheerful presence of a younger friend ;  
And would by chance at breakfast-time remark,  
The compliment was really due to Spark.

“ And so,” said Mrs. Spence, “ ’tis plain your niece  
Sins against Heaven by ruining my peace.  
She must be sent from this to Connaught, say,  
Or Orkney, till the danger’s passed away.  
Her life must certainly be dull with you,  
And she may like to look for something new ;  
But go she must ; I’ll hear of no pretence  
For wrong and insult to the house of Spence.”  
“ I’ll send her, to remove the pain you feel,  
A pleasant voyage to Lapland or Brazil ;  
But, though I blush to speak it, there will need  
A great expense if we with haste proceed ;  
And, honoured Madam ! I, alas ! am poor,  
And barely keep the wolf beyond my door.  
Had I the means it were my pride—”  
—“ I’ll pay,”  
The lady said, “ to save an hour’s delay ;

So take whate'er you please. I'm always sure  
To find your sense correct, and virtue pure.  
Now go ; I trust, before to-morrow's dawn,  
To hear your niece is quietly withdrawn."

As Spark returned, 'mid thoughts obscure and stern,  
He strove his future pathway to discern ;  
But found the task not easy. Ann had wealth,  
Though she had never heard it, e'en by stealth ;  
And none, save Samuel, knew it, for the gold  
Her father left her uncle never told.  
She thought herself, as all in Aleborough said,  
A helpless creature by his bounty fed ;  
Meanwhile her fortune managed as his own  
Had gained Heaven's blessing and had largely grown.  
But should he let her go beyond his ken,  
And some one wed her, what his outlet then ?  
Too much of danger were there to maintain  
The fraud ; to own it over much of pain.  
Yet go she must ; the Spence estates and power,  
All hung for him upon that anxious hour ;  
And he at last resolved to send her forth,  
*To some far nook, East, West, or South, or North ;*

He cared not whither, if secure that there  
No dangerous tongue should whisper, "Ann is fair."

Now, in her chamber all alone, the maid  
Her polished limbs and shoulders disarrayed ;  
One little taper gave the only light,  
One little mirror caught so dear a sight ;  
'Mid hangings dusk and shadows wide she stood,  
Like some pale nymph in dark-leaved solitude  
Of rocks and gloomy waters all alone,  
Where sunshine scarcely breaks on stump or stone  
To scare the dreamy vision. Thus did she,  
A star in deepest night, intent but free,  
Gleam through the eyeless darkness, heeding not  
Her beauty's praise, but musing o'er her lot.

Her garments, one by one, she laid aside,  
And then her knotted hair's long locks untied  
With careless hand, and down her cheeks they fell,  
And o'er her maiden bosom's blue-veined swell.  
The right-hand fingers played amidst her hair,  
And with her reverie wandered here and there.

The other hand sustained the only dress,  
That now but half concealed her loveliness ;  
And pausing, aimlessly she stood, and thought,  
In virgin beauty, by no fear distraught :  
The living truth of many a vision seen,  
By shaping souls in ecstasy serene,  
Which passion taints not, but the starry fire  
Of Fancy glows unweakened by Desire ;  
A noble woman, bright, and fond, and true,  
Whose grace a spirit from within her grew ;  
Old Earth's young queenly daughter, at whose feet  
Wise Love were proud to fall with homage meet.

But this is not our tale. Poor Ann undressed,  
Stood pondering over doubts that would not rest,  
Handling her hair, and with the other hand  
Crossed on her breast. It seemed an ocean strand  
That she was placed on, and the sea of things  
Dim-rolling drowned her eyes' weak questionings.  
Angels that stood or fell, strange bowers of bliss,  
Her lover's voice, all Being's cloud abyss ;  
What earthly fate was hers ; how life and death  
*Blend their long issues in each moment's breath ;*

All this and more she thought of, till, at last,  
On Heaven's great will her endless cares she cast.

“Thou Friend above, around, within my breast,  
Whom never seen, all things, all thoughts attest ;  
One changeless Lord, Father of Worlds, with whom  
Eternal Silence drinks up Time's loud boom ;  
Amid the war of ages, and the blast  
That sweeps off suns and stars into the past ;  
Thou hearest every murmur of a bee  
In lowliest weeds, nor wilt be deaf to me.  
While all seems whirling round me, and the skies  
A sackcloth tent, and earth all dust and sighs ;  
In this I rest : that though perplexed and wrong,  
Thy creature faints, yet Thou art alway strong,  
And canst not will the woes of hearts endowed  
By Thee with life, in faith before Thee bowed.  
Spirit ! teach Thou to read the strength and bliss  
That shine from all things, save to souls remiss ;  
And in the trackless vague, where spectres dwell,  
Baffling sad hope till it grows infidel,  
Do Thou, with calm and all-beholding gaze,  
Still watch and guard thy child's bewildered ways.

Thou still this faith rekindle ! That thy power  
Prepares not death, delights not to devour ;  
And 'mid the gloom, that makes all eyes despond,  
And chokes the lamp, thy light is still beyond ;  
And we, whom Thou hast framed so strangely wise  
With all our weakness yet from sin may rise ;  
Sun-light art Thou, and Love, and those who know  
Thee thus, have wings that will not rest below.  
If endless midnight be thy children's doom,  
Why dreams of day the heart thine arms entomb ? ”

Somused the girl, with thoughts obscure though grand,  
Whose worth she felt, but could not understand,  
Nor heeded whence they came : for aught she knew,  
From some hot, black, unearthly Timbuctoo,  
Or danger-teeming doubt-infected land,  
The soil of tenets marked as contraband.  
For she nor sceptics read, nor dogmatists,  
Nor knew how sophists bait theosophists ;  
Nor e'er had learnt, while sipping thought with tea,  
To talk of Plato, Kant, and Koong-foo-tse.  
She would have liked a fairy tale far more  
*Than Hegel's* nay than Bentham's deepest lore ;

Nor cared a scrap of curling-paper, if  
*Vorstellung* is or is not mere *Begriff*;  
Nor knew that virtue is but pleasure dressed  
In what disguise opinion holds the best.

But she, though young, had been impelled to think  
Without much help from printer's magic ink ;  
And her quick heart and sleepless fancy caught  
Some wildfire sparks of philosophic thought ;  
And made her feel, not knowing why nor whence,  
Nor finding words, although she had the sense,  
That metaphysics, help they us or hurt,  
Are nearer much to all than shift or shirt.

Now Ann, at last her mute devotions o'er,  
Perceived the fact she had forgot before  
Of her primeval nudity, and shame  
Flushed from her heart o'er all the snowy frame :  
And struck from top to toe with burning dread,  
She blew the light out, and escaped to bed.  
There friendly sleep, with mists of fragrant dew,  
Steeped her tired eyes, and anxious cares withdrew.



And now the boundless inward skies of dream  
Above her showed their depths of starry gleam;  
And in a cockle skiff she sailed away,  
On league-deep waters, till she reached a bay:  
And lo ! her boat became a swan, and spread  
Great silver wings, and through the mild air sped,  
Bearing her on his downy throne aloft.  
Her back was tow'rds his neck, whose plumage soft  
With her right arm she clasped, and felt it swell  
Against her beating side, while downward fell  
Her feet, along the back of sun-warm snow,  
And those wide pinions wantoned to and fro.  
So while her face looked forward o'er the head  
Of her sky-beast, long, long they journeyéd.  
The east lay bright before them, but no sun  
Proclaimed that vision's endless day begun;  
Though, from below the brink, it shot a dart,  
Whose diamond struck the swan's unshielded heart,  
And he was dead. Yet felt she no dismay,  
When now the bird a marble ruin lay ;  
A Sphinx of stone, and she between its feet,  
Sat shaded in that high chin's huge retreat.

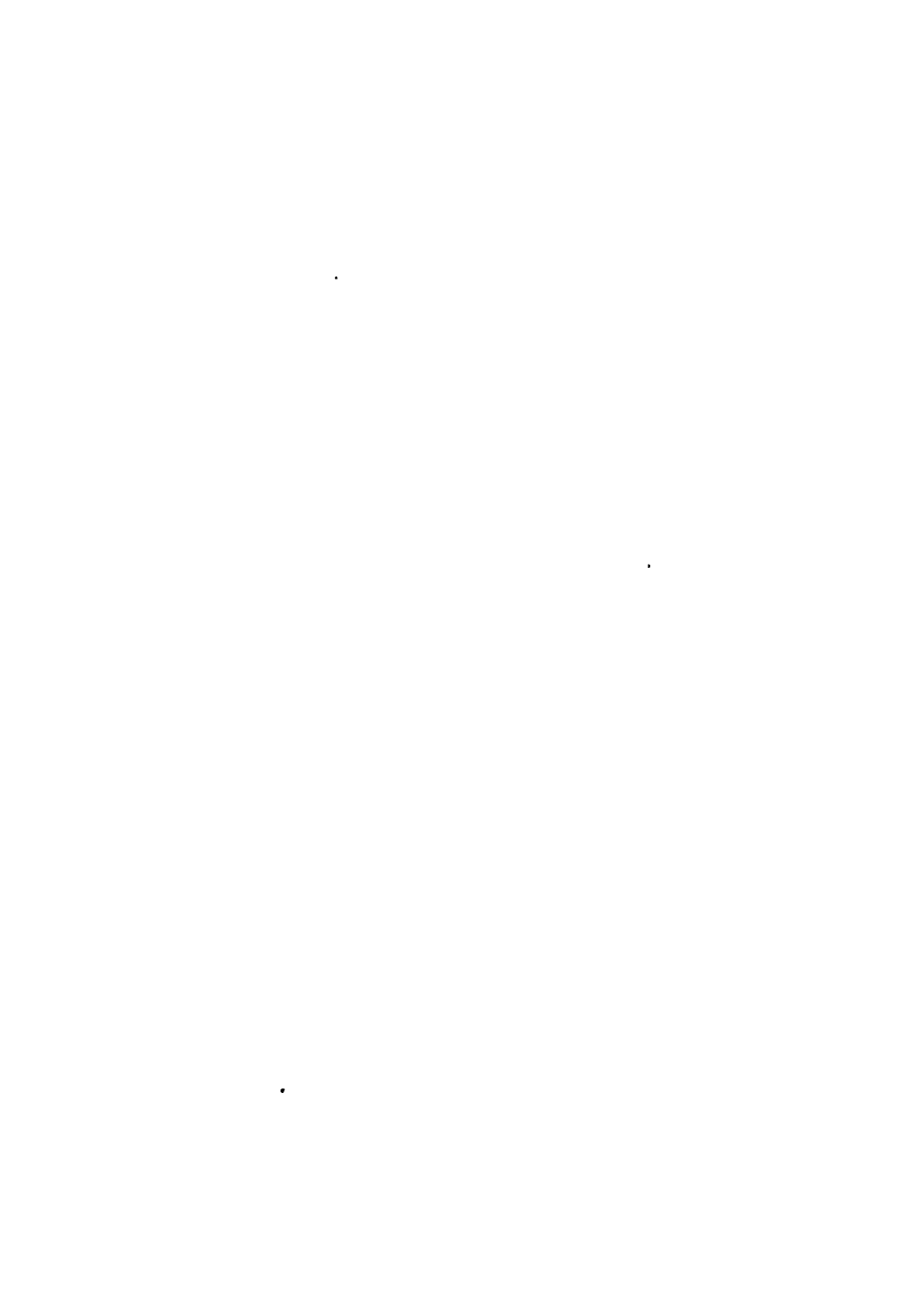
A world of fanes and statues rose around  
Immense, and porphyry pavement hid the ground ;  
Of granite, alabaster, bronze, and gold  
The shapes, and all immeasurably old.  
Tiaraed fronts, of ancient king and priest,  
Some winged, and some with head of mystic beast ;  
Such solid brain-born shadows as express  
Man's awful mind in uncouth wondrousness,  
And seem to hold ten thousand years unknown,  
To sleep subdued within each silent stone.  
One golden giant, whose tall stature caught  
The morn's first light, and looked with flames inwrought,  
Sang as it kindled, and so sweet the song,  
All other sound to listening Heaven does wrong.  
The words were lost for living ears, but spake  
What we shall utter when from life we wake.  
And while the statue chanted, in his eyes  
The maiden saw revealed his soul's disguise ;  
Saw, with a joy that troubled her like pain,  
The gold colossus turn to Francis Vane.  
Nor this was changed alone ; a temple showed  
Ten rows of statues, bearing each its load ;

A roof of granite beams, by heads of rock  
Sustained, defying e'en an earthquake shock.  
In those dark vistas old religion kept  
Its watch, and time's immortal serpent slept.  
Her eyes drawn thitherward, she knew not how,  
Beheld a change on each basaltic brow ;  
For there were Aleborough's faces all alive,  
Mogg, Whisk, and Snug, and Drum, and Snooks, and Clive;  
And they, with shouts, were hailing loud and long  
The golden god's electioneering song.  
Till, 'mid the noise, these words were plain : " I say,  
Get up, and dress yourself without delay !"  
And holding down a light, before her eyes  
Stood Samuel Spark, and said, " I tell you rise !"  
Nor e'er than this did any gloomier ghost  
Prowl up to men from death's abysmal coast.

# THE ELECTION.



## BOOK VI.



## BOOK VI.

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BEHIND Spark's garden-wall there ran a road,  
'Mid Aleborough's ways a sort of episode,  
And mostly skipped by men ; grass-grown it lay,  
And looked a path for spectres e'en by day.  
Its bounds dead walls, which dead trees overhung,  
And ditches dead, wherein dead dogs were flung.  
Upon this lane there issued out a door,  
Which Ann had never seen unlocked before.  
By her stern uncle here she now was led,  
Amid the darkness, while she shook with dread ;  
And in the lane a dusky carriage stood  
With lamps, like fiendish eyes that glared for food.  
The door was open, and the steps let down,  
And Samuel signed her in with threatening frown :  
But she now turning, said, " May I not know,  
The cause of this, and whither I'm to go ? "

To which he answered, "Only trust my care ;  
You'll know your destination when you're there.  
Old Moll's inside, so now jump in at once !  
I have not time for talk. What ! cry, you dunce ?  
That's right, be off, postilion ! Ann, good-bye ;  
Be careful, Molly, do not let her cry !  
Well, that, thank Heaven, is settled ; but young Vane  
Has still to rue his tongue's mad hurricane."  
And so he locked the door, and went to bed,  
Wishing both niece and candidate were dead.

Meanwhile poor Ann, half choking, tried to say,  
"Do tell me, Molly, why I'm sent away ?"  
And Moll replied, "It's all perhaps a prank [Frank.  
Of Spark's."—What, Molly ? Heaven and earth ! 'tis

Then round her waist his arm he gently laid,  
As one of his own happiness afraid.  
One thrill of joy there was beneath his touch,  
And then the spasm, the heart's extreme too much ;  
And she lay back, and in the darkness came  
The rushing tears, the sobs of joy and shame ;

Till tow'rd himself her breast he softly drew,  
And she though trembling felt the man was true.  
Then, unimpaired by speech, the long embrace  
Concentred all they knew of time and space,  
And blent the two young spirits' inmost breath,  
In one sweet moment, deep and strange as death ;  
Nor either deemed, when lost in that long kiss,  
That love has aught of rapture more than this ;  
And scarce as yet a word in whisper steals,  
Amid the horses' tramp, and roar of wheels.

But Ann, at length remembering, quaked and sighed,  
And asked how Frank was there, who thus replied :—  
“ Poor Moll beside that man of greed and scorn  
Was like a lock of wool upon a thorn.  
She fondly cherished you, and her keen eyes  
Soon found a loop-hole through my close disguise.  
And when she passed me by, her cunning glance  
And thin pursed lips expressed her complaisance.  
But till this evening not a word was said,  
Though still the looks of each she silyly weighed.  
An hour ago she tapped upon my door,  
*A stretch of boldness never dared before,*



And entering pale and terror-struck, the dame  
Strove in low tones her boiling heart to tame :  
And said her master had resolved Miss Ann  
At once must travel tow'rds the Isle of Man,  
With Moll to lead and rule her, and abide  
In that retreat, till change of time and tide.  
The cause he told not, but with dreadful oath  
Commanded silence, else would crush them both.  
This tale declared, she ended, saying, ' Sir,  
I'm sure he means at least to murder her.'  
And hoped, when Member I should have the power  
To shut him up for life in London Tower :  
And she would wait on him with duteous will,  
' For though a villain, he 's my master still.'  
I mused, then said, ' I'm sure that all must see  
The close resemblance of yourself and me.'—  
Her eyes and mouth in wonder widely spread,—  
' 'Tis clear your bonnet would become my head ;  
And there's that shawl of yours, and sitting down,  
And in the dark, 'twill do, I'd bet a crown.'  
So now at last she understood the plan,  
And with a long dry laugh away she ran.

Your uncle sent her on towards the chaise,  
And I was watching in the garden's maze,  
Assumed her attributes, and sent her back,  
And charged her to escape, nor leave a track ;  
And so we 're here. To-morrow morning, sweet !  
Must make my little stratagem complete,  
If this dear hand refuses not to wear  
A small gold circlet, love's expressive snare."

One finger-touch replied, nor aught beyond  
Could more have knit their faith's eternal bond.  
Still whizzed their wheels, as if impelled behind  
Amid the dark by fate's pursuing wind.  
But all within was love's mild air, and they  
At midnight knew delight's unclouded day.  
Their high-toned spirits could not slumber now,  
When first whate'er they felt they dared avow ;  
And much they talked the past, the future o'er,  
Repeating still what oft was said before ;  
Like some clear stream, whose ever-flowing waves  
With the same murmur fill the self-same caves.

But 'mid this trivial love-ennobled talk,  
Where Ariel's music haunts a village walk,  
Ann now besought him to resume once more  
His youthful history, dropped by chance before.  
"You know," he said, "how vague and aimless grief  
Amid the Furca's wilds had sought relief,  
But rather found in rocks, ravines and snows  
The huge dull shapes that mock our fretful woes.  
I stood one day above a black abyss,  
And felt despair at best a tedious bliss;  
But knew that jumping over were a cast  
Beyond both joke and cure. Just then there passed  
A string of mules, poor beasts that much decried,  
Are yet too wise to think of suicide,  
Plod o'er all roads, their fodder bravely chew,  
And thus in peace at last their lives review.  
The man looked firm and gay, and through the shade  
Of his broad hat the world with joy surveyed;  
And chanted blithe a liquid southern song  
Of love and sunshine while he cracked his thong.  
'Come, cross the mountain, friend! Don't linger here,'  
Cried as he passed, the sturdy muleteer.

I liked his frankness, sent a herdsman back  
To fetch my bundle, and pursued the track.  
We crossed St. Gothard, and the second day  
Italian vales at evening round me lay.

“As morning music, gliding on the night,  
Both wakes and soothes a dreamer's dark affright,  
So that fair land with gradual beauty stole  
Through all my gloom, and harmonised my soul.  
I learnt to love once more the paths of men,  
Their looks and voices gave me life again,  
And I forgot my miseries, and could bless  
The sounds of work, and tones of cheerfulness.

“At eve I stood, and saw the lake's expanse  
Reflect the shores in sunset's crimson glance ;  
And there I marked, beside the cottage door,  
Mother and child, the chestnuts hanging o'er.  
Against the channelled stem, the father now  
Leaning at rest, looks on with easy brow,  
And says, that come the Assumption's feast, he'll give  
For Lisa's neck a scarlet handkerchief ;

Young Renzo asks, if Heaven's bright garden bears  
Chestnuts and grapes, as ripe and sweet as theirs ?  
And Lisa teaches all believed of old,  
The silver flowers, and fruits of mellow gold.  
Such sights attuned my breast, and I began  
To feel existence not a curse on man.

“From thence to Florence lured, and then to Rome,  
I learnt how large, how full our human home.  
Past ages opened round me, wondrous days,  
When gods on earth were plain to mortal gaze,  
And all of high Belief and Action strong  
At once grew beautiful in stone or song.  
The Grecian shapes divine in Papal halls  
Unchain the Reason which the priest enthralls ;  
There, too, on Raffael's world of truth and love,  
Our loftier Heaven reveals the mystic Dove ;  
And fixed as rocks, and deep as starry skies,  
Old Michael's Seers above creation rise.  
And still, as round the swimmer's limbs the sea  
Sustaining plays, so Rome supported me  
In its clear greatness. 'Mid those purpled hills,  
*Brown ruins, piles that Art's long triumph fills,*



Beauty, the perfect form of visible good,  
With calm eyes floated always near unwooded,  
A present genius, till I dared to feel  
A bliss that fears and hopes from all conceal.

“ When two years more beneath Italian skies  
Like weeks had passed, quick thoughts began to rise.  
I would return to England, there would toil  
To raise new flowers in that ancestral soil,  
To spread a livelier sense for all the good  
That strengthens Man, nor let the daily food,  
Nor wealth, nor party strife, the wretch enslave,  
Nor hungry Virtue’s bribes beyond the grave.  
To feed the mouth, but nourish more the soul,  
With hope to warm and nerve by self-control  
The breasts of all, and in our dusky clime  
Wake those pure tastes that bigots call a crime,  
Thus high my wish ; before me still success  
Retires, and often leaves me comfortless.

“ Again I stood on English ground, and felt  
How I was changed since gaily there I dwelt.

I went to London ; hired one humble room,  
And kept my soul in sunshine 'mid the gloom ;  
Surveying still with eager eyes the throng,  
Loved them when right, and pitied them when wrong ;  
And prayed that Heaven would tenfold light reveal,  
And rouse their lords and priests to wiser zeal.

“ Vague hopes, no doubt, that overshot my power,  
Yet based on truth as clouds o'er mountains tower.  
My youth's bold spirit ever strong within,  
And faith in man, cried—‘ Haste ! thy work begin ! ’  
And long I pondered o'er the how, the what,  
Till Fate's determining hand transformed my lot.  
A rumour found me in my lone retreat  
That told of Emma's death : so sad, so fleet  
Her course had been, a creature come from high  
Only to love, to suffer, and to die.  
For me her loss, though sure, devoured belief  
In the dark vault of self-confusing grief,  
And Earth seemed one live tomb.

My home was then  
Near those bright halls where Athens lives again

In Phidian forms, where Pallas from her shrine  
Has led the gods and heroes still divine  
In stainless beauty, where the youthful breath  
Of old Religion conquers time and death,  
Repairs all wounds, and lights all eyes anew,  
Till in the beautiful we own the true.

“For I, although I hold my tongue for peace,  
Must doubt that Heaven abhors the gods of Greece ;  
And e’en, though tracts may call me infidel,  
That Sophocles and Plato sprang from hell.  
Yet through long trials have I come to be  
A follower in religion pure and free,  
Of Him whose spirit ever works to mould  
Men’s inward life, and change their clay to gold ;  
In whose full goodness and unwavering view  
Of Truth’s whole import, Man is born anew ;  
And e’en though largely wise and sternly just,  
Is bowed to penitence and self-distrust.

“ Confused and dark those famous halls I sought,  
And spent a day in melancholy thought ;



But still the grave symmetric forms around  
Recalled my soul to wisdom's holy ground ;  
And she, the lost, the meek, seemed hovering there  
Amid the mild immortals ever fair :  
Upon her locks dark violets newly blown,  
Beneath her virgin breast a silver zone ;  
A child of earth, from sorrow gone to dwell  
In Death's melodious meads of asphodel.

“ Ere long I learnt the tale. Her wedded life,  
Though joyless all, had been exempt from strife ;  
Nor much had she that could her heart distress  
Except her husband's total carelessness.  
Cold but polite, and unconcerned not hard,  
With nought to raise disgust or win regard,  
This Lord, all smoothness, manners, fashion, coat,  
Whose brain ne'er climbed above an anecdote,  
Discerned in her no heart to win or lose,  
But sometimes praised her feathers or her shoes;  
Disbursed her money like a well-bred man,  
Forgot her feelings, but picked up her fan ;  
Believed the title she had gain'd from him  
*Must fill the largest wish above the brim,*

And would have wondered much to think her breast  
Was not as quiet as his Lordship's vest.

“And so at last she died. Lord Bray meanwhile  
Had always met her father with a smile,  
But never gone to seek him ; rather oft  
Had shunned him, and, 'twas said, sometimes had scoffed,  
Behind his back, at his plebeian birth,  
And glanced at tradesmen with a placid mirth.  
This reach'd the Banker's ears, whose shame and hate  
Revenged upon himself his daughter's fate.

“'Twas said that Bowyer, weak in health and mind,  
Had left for ever England's shores behind,  
And gone to Naples. Weeks had held their course  
Since Emma's death, which still subdued my force,  
Till, to alleviate memory's aching pain,  
I sought that house beside the Thames again.  
The gates were now thrown back ; a printed bill  
Announced a sale, and all might pass at will.  
But now 'twas early morn, and I alone  
Was there to see those glories overthrown :

The marble Muses, from their homes displaced,  
Stood on the lawn, a prize for men of taste,  
As if their inspiration could be bought,  
And seemed to droop in sad and songless thought.  
The busts of Homer and of Cicero lay  
Together, ready to be packed away  
At some barbarian's word ; and every room  
Was opened wide to meet the coming doom.

“ I wandered through them dreaming, while anew  
Poor Emma's childhood rose before my view ;  
And now a mirror would her form restore,  
And now her light step thrill the corridor.  
The well-known pictures hung for sale ; one place  
Was blank, and that her portrait used to grace,  
A seven-years-old Titania—still she smiled  
On me from that bare wall, a fairy child.  
There too was her piano, ne'er again  
To yield beneath her hand its plaintive strain ;  
But, ah ! from it an endless maze of songs  
Came back, that even still its wail prolongs  
Within my breast. That hour, oh ! dearest Ann,  
*Might* well have won to good a worthless man.

I found the books the same that she and I  
Had read together, words that cannot die,  
Though her sweet sound is mute ; in Spenser's Lay  
Was still her mark, a light verbena spray,  
Una's memorial, but ah ! where was now  
Her hand that fondly wreathed of old my brow ?

“ Her spirit thus in memory's twilight glade  
Beside me sat, and I like her a shade ;  
She still a child in aspect, with a look  
Of love that seemed all Being's infinite book.

“ 'Twas after this I sought the place where we  
Were first to meet, that village by the sea.  
I hoped to find again in ocean's roar  
The peaceful strength of purpose mine before ;  
As you to nerve a youthful frame whose bloom  
Paled in your niggard uncle's angry gloom.  
Blessed be the doctor whose benignant sway  
Prevailed at last to have you sent away ;  
Blessed that old farm-house where you lodged, and grove  
Of beeches where 'twas ours so oft to rove ;

And blessed, dear Ann ! that hearty farmer's wife,  
And her red cheeks ; how scant, how calm her life !  
How broad the laugh that filled her shining face  
Whene'er she saw me linger near the place !  
And how she shook the ribbons round her chin,  
While answering, ' Yes, sir, yes ; Miss Ann's within ! '  
And more than all be blessed those wild sea-waves  
That saw us, only they, frequent their caves,  
And while they burst and thundered, had a tone  
Of music, breathed perhaps for us alone !

“ Or e'er can I, sweet Ann, that hour forget,  
When first on danger's sudden brink we met ?  
When rushing with light feet and loosen'd hair,  
And shriek of grief and glances of despair,  
Along the dizzy rocks I saw you go,  
Lovely in terror, springing like the roe,  
And speeding reckless down ; and then the cry  
Before you reached me—' Save them, or they die !  
The boat is sinking ! '—You, whom ne'er before  
I had beheld, but should forget no more ;  
The panting tale, how rambling on the cliff,  
*You chanced to spy the small and drowning skiff,*



And its waved signal : then the haste I made  
To launch a boat, with our old fisher's aid,  
And all the trembling moments, till at last  
We caught the boys still clinging to the mast.  
But drenched and gasping, while upon the beach  
You stood and seemed the billows to beseech,  
Until you met us 'mid the breaking foam,  
And made the earth you glorified my home.  
And when in that poor hut upon the strand,  
You chafed their pulseless limbs with zealous hand,  
And bending o'er them, breathed on each cold mouth  
Your own warm soul, the breezes of the south,  
And turned to me with looks of young delight,  
When bloom in those wan cheeks repaid your sight,  
To me, more wondrous than to them, you gave  
A worthier life than that you sought to save ;  
And every movement, glance and touch and tone,  
With your bright being seem'd to fill my own.

“ To this you know, dear Ann, what sunny days  
Succeeded, blessing all our words and ways,  
With fays and angels filling every nook  
Of lane or wood, and brightening flower and brook ;

While all the prints of hob-nailed shoes to us  
Seemed marks of sprites, blissful and amorous ;  
And every deepening hour I felt anew  
My life's whole meaning, sharing it with you.

“ Then wherefore spake I not to gain a prize,  
Whereof my quest had needed no disguise ?  
Because unknown and poor, I could not yet  
Spell out the future by love's alphabet ;  
But lingered in the faith I soon should find  
Some path to walk in, scarcely yet divined.

“ To me, thus doubtful, now a letter came,  
That had not reached me in my altered name.  
It told, that Bowyer lay in pain and care  
At far Marseilles, and asked to see me there.  
I went, and travelled swiftly ; found him weak,  
But clear of head his inmost thoughts to speak.  
He said, that he perhaps had done me wrong ;  
If so, had suffered heavily and long :  
His daughter, at the last, had willed to me  
*Wealth* which his own forecast had left her free ;

In that dark hour he saw her, and approved  
Her large bequest to him whom still she loved ;  
And to myself he gladly, as he said,  
Confirmed the dying wishes of the dead.  
We parted calmly ; he survives as yet,  
And still, I trust, is thankful that we met.

“ I came not straight to Samuel, as I knew  
His crabbed soul repelled all suit for you ;  
But soon I found the Election's fair pretence  
To balk his craft—and here's my recompense.”

Thus onward through the darkness, 'mid the hush  
Of night's mysterious empire, still they rush.  
His voice and circling arm are all to Ann  
That woman's heart has ever asked of man—  
A blessedness that dreams not of increase,  
The self-sufficed repose of perfect peace.

At last she spoke.—“ Oh! what will Aleborough say,  
When its Electors find that you're away ?”—  
Frank laughed, and answered—“ Dearest Ann, that jest  
Has played its part, and now may safely rest.



Before I came to Aleborough, well I knew  
Success was all but certain for the Blue.  
This too did Samuel know, but still would try  
To keep afloat the profitable lie,  
And gain a dupe's superfluous cash ; while those  
About him served his cunning as he chose.  
'Twas you I ventured for, and made the part  
Of hustings patriot help a lover's heart.  
Thus, doubting not the strife's result, at ease  
I spoke the truth, nor heeded what would please.  
Hence wide dismay ; but now the world must own  
That, forfeiting a seat, I gained a throne."

# THE ELECTION.



## BOOK VII.



## BOOK VII.

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WHEN Ann and Moll drove off, 'twas lately said  
That Spark much meditating went to bed,  
And thus he pondered : " Well, no doubt that some,  
And specially my neighbour Parson Drum,  
Might with unfriendly look my conduct scan,  
And hold me but a questionable man,  
For this one reason, that I quite discern  
And act on rules which they still blundering learn.  
Good easy decent virtues, all the talk  
Of Duty, buzzing round men's daily walk,  
I have seen through—the forms with which mankind  
Each other cheat, and fain themselves would blind—  
And all I know are worthless : Truth, a name  
For vain opinion ; Conscience, fear of blame ;  
Religion, but the dread of something bad  
Beyond the grave, which makes the feeble mad ;

Love, Friendship, Kindness, fictions that allure  
The incautious prey our hunger would secure ;  
Conventional decorums, good to wear  
As Sunday suits when we to church repair.  
Strength is true Goodness ; Worth is obstinate Will ;  
And Virtue but the gamester's perfect skill.  
Not Right, but Might's the secret : all the cant  
And sham of things, the moral preacher's rant,  
Are instruments of gain. The world is mine,  
Whose art can win it ; such is Right Divine.  
Facts—Facts—the solid stuff of life, are more  
Than all the visions mystic minds adore ;  
And while with love of saint and sage they glow,  
I envy Danton, honour Mirabeau ;  
Successful quacks, although their day was brief,  
Whose genius gained, but never felt belief ;  
Knaves if you will—what then ? True wisdom's praise  
Survives for them, when all romance decays."

He slept, and dreamt ; and round him opening saw  
An Office huge, where sped the work of Law ;  
Where one Attorney in his hands combined  
*The varied business of all human-kind,*

Dressed like a gentleman in black, but clean,  
And for white linen wearing flame serene.  
Alone he wrought, and in his face enorm  
Was seen the image of a frozen storm ;  
And, like wan lightnings over midnight snows,  
From his fixed eyes the gleams at whiles arose.

Old Adam stood before the table there,  
With trousers often patched, and coat threadbare,  
And looked a bankrupt ; gazing on a pile  
Of bonds and deeds, with bills on many a file.  
Large maps of all the earth were hung around,  
Mines, cities, kingdoms, isles of fertile ground :  
At each the ruined owner stared, and read  
The dark word *Mortgaged* there, and shook his head ;  
While his unanxious friend with easy glance  
Pursued his eyes o'er India, Chili, France,  
And with a pen's quick stroke seemed dotting down  
Each wealthy realm, and each imperial town.  
On one fair northern isle, whose cities vast  
Shone bright with gold from lands and seas amassed,  
The great attorney's eyes a moment clung  
With special bliss, as tigress o'er her young.

At last, with accents hoarse and tremulous  
The broken-hearted man addressed him thus :—  
“ Dear sir, when first my business went amiss,  
I little thought it e’er would come to this ;  
That lands and houses, wife and children, all  
In one destruction must together fall.  
And when I sold that Asiatic seat  
And garden, though I own ’twas not discreet,  
Yet still how much remained !—till all was lost—  
Gone bit by bit, and now I feel the cost.  
Dear sir !—good gentleman !—this bill renew !  
Reflect how much I’ve always trusted you,  
And do not see me starve. My sons, your slaves,  
I’m sure would give what little nature craves,  
If you would let them ; but your tasks require  
Their utmost toil, and very small their hire.  
You know, dear sir, that I, the first of men,  
Was once earth’s king, now scarce its denizen :  
The smallest contribution, sir, indeed,  
Would claim my thanks, and help my wretched need.”

“ Friend,” said the lawyer, “ I deplore your case,  
And feel no triumph at your deep disgrace,

Though I foresaw it ! but I must decline  
To give an idle pauper bread of mine.  
It is against my principles and plan,  
Which I cannot infringe for any man.  
Now, as I'm busy, pray excuse me"—Hark !  
A sound ; and listening turned the patriarch,  
When, in the victim stripped of home and pelf,  
The shuddering Samuel groaned to see—himself.

But still the noise increased, and waking slow,  
The crash proved real, blow renewed on blow,  
Rap—rap—re-rap—upon his outward door,  
Enough to break a mammoth's fossil snore ;  
And blending with the terror of his dream,  
It made him almost pray, and quite blaspheme :  
And still the alarm increased, till he arose,  
Wrapped in the counterpane instead of clothes,  
And groping down, the hall-door bolts undid,  
Much wondering what the vocal darkness hid ;  
When, at the last, his horror grew intense,  
To hear a woman say, "I'm Mistress Spence."



In haste and grief exclaimed the voice,—“ Despair  
Has brought me here beyond what I can bear.  
My son, my son, Fitzurse !—My only son !  
Spark, 'tis your niece's fault, with her he's gone,  
And nought remains but we must follow them.  
It is not him but her I most condemn.  
Still, ere the mischief's done, we may by speed  
The culprits catch, and their designs impede.  
Come, Spark, and in the carriage you shall know  
The dreadful greatness of a mother's woe.”

In his white drapery, staggering and amazed,  
Through night's pale darkness on the dame he gazed,  
And could but stammer out—“ Your son, my niece,  
Eloped, mad, madam,—where will madness cease ?”—  
Then said, a moment's quiet thought to gain,  
“ I'll put my clothes on, and be back again”—  
And left her standing in the doorway dim,  
Like some dark fate or fury waiting him.  
He soon return'd, but knew too well how small  
The chance his tyrant would her plan recall ;  
And muttering inwardly, “ That wise young man  
*Himself* must guide the Election as he can,”

Spark to the carriage followed Mistress Spence,  
And her four horses bore them swiftly thence.

Through long drear tracts of sigh, reproach, and wail,  
Like a faint pathway ran Diana's tale ;  
This all the certain fact that Spark could find,  
Fitzurse had gone and left a note behind :  
“ Dear ma'am, I'd rather be an old maid's cat,  
Than live on cant and humbug, and all that ;  
From your sharp drill I'm now for ever free—  
The prettiest girl I know goes off with me.  
So now for fun ! A line may be addressed,  
*‘ Poste restante, Paris, ’* where perhaps 'twill rest.”

Spark vainly swore that Ann was gone that eve  
With Moll—his patroness would not believe.  
In vain he prompted hopes, and schemes devised,  
Groaned, reasoned, flattered, listened, sympathised ;  
One might as well when *Ætna's* flames explode,  
Attempt to quench them by a soothing ode.  
And if poor Spark but hints, that still perchance  
'Twas not his niece who lured Fitzurse to France,

The dame with strenuous argument replies,—  
“I’ve read his words myself; I trust my eyes.”

’Twere hard for tongue to tell what weary pain  
Hour after hour tormented Samuel’s brain.  
Night passed, and day: the wheels were turning still  
As whirled Ixion’s pauseless water-mill,  
That ground for him not corn, but chaff; the night  
Returned again and hid the world from sight,  
But near them ocean roared on Dover strand,  
And here they knew the fugitives at hand,  
They found the hotel; they learnt the chamber door;  
The lawyer moved behind, the dame before;  
And, shrieking loud at once from rage and dread,  
She saw a lady with Fitzurse in bed.

“Now, Mister Spark, you see I knew the case!  
Your modest niece there well may hide her face.  
Alas! ’tis true, I’m made a wretch for life;  
I hope at least, Fitzurse, she’s not your wife?”

“Yes, ma’am, she is,” replied the youth; “and so  
*I beg you’ll both be good enough to go.\**”

"Pray, first," entreated Spark, "restore me peace  
By telling us the lady's not my niece."

She raised her head, and showed the moonstruck pair  
The pretty barmaid of the Aleborough Bear,  
Red round and buxom, rather pert than wise,  
With full fresh lips and active hazel eyes.

"Lauk!" quoth the damsel, "us is married, marm!  
And sure for man and wife it's not no harm."  
Spark in his arms the swooning lady bore,  
While her Fitzurse behind them locked the door.

The morn that saw this elder couple bent  
In haste and anguish tow'rd the coast of Kent,  
To Aleborough brought the Election's clang and crush,  
The Electors' strut, the Non-electors' rush.  
With tenfold flag and ribbon flames the town;  
The rival bands blare out tenfold renown;  
Each public-house its ale and gin supplies,  
Unearned, unstinted, each its mutton pies;  
Five thousand souls with zeal and fury swell;  
Five thousand tongues the waves of air impel;  
And while the wise and foolish, poor and rich,  
All take a side, scarce knowing which is which,

The patriot conflagration burns and fumes,  
And in its rage both parties' cash consumes.

At their appointed posts the Electors met,  
With each his small request their chiefs beset ;  
The great Committee-men, on either side,  
Like Homer's heroes, through the battle stride ;  
And now the poll begins—the Assessors sit  
Sublimely sure that what is writ, is writ ;  
The lawyers watch the votes ; the skies look down  
Unpardonably calm, nor heed the town.  
But swift through all the crowd a rumour grows,  
As some dire sound before an earthquake's throes,  
That Spark has fled—no, both—not Spark, but Vane :  
And now 'tis neither, now 'tis both again.  
The Moggites smile, nay laugh, but still persist  
In voting keenly, lest some chance be missed.  
The faces of the Reds look white or black,  
Their cheers in murmurs faint, their votes are slack ;  
Their leaders shake their heads, and one by one  
Move off, as if a coming woe to shun.  
So ships, when convoyed in a stormy night,  
*Scatter* if vanishes the frigate's light ;



An arch so tumbles if the piers give way,  
And buries sheep and shepherd where they lay ;  
And so three volumes, produce of a year,  
Die of a week's reviews and disappear.

The crowd, now fearing they might lose their sport,  
With fury caught and swelled the strange report,  
And stirred in aimless motion up and down,  
With oaths and shouts and onsets filled the town.  
'Twas said, at midnight Spark in lightnings blue  
Had vanished from a blue policeman's view  
Through his own chimney, and, 'twas manifest,  
Had left nor tail nor claw for "Crowner's quest :"  
But no,—the man, in spite of envy's grudge,  
Was gone to London to be made a judge ;  
Or Vane and he had fought, and Frank was dead,  
And Spark, with several wounds, from Aleborough fled ;  
Or Vane, Prince Albert's brother in disguise,  
Had poisoned Spark to smother all surmise.

But soon the stream of men began to flow  
Tow'rd Spark's abode, and there the truth would know ;

Nor men alone—boys, women, horse, and cart,  
All from the market-place at once depart ;  
And soon they gather round the red-brick house,  
And would prevent the escape of e'en a mouse.  
So there they knock and clamour, but no sound  
Replies to those who gird the mansion round ;  
For Moll was gone, and Samuel's other maid,  
Thus left alone, and of herself afraid,  
Had also fled, nor left a Christian soul,  
Save one black cat, to keep entire control.

From shrieks and raps the mob advanced to blows,  
And swift a storm of mud and stones arose ;  
The glazier's boy began, and pane on pane  
Crashes, 'mid shouts—" Old Spark, where's Mister  
Vane ? "

The iron rails uptorn, as crow-bars burst  
The door, and hundreds shove to enter first.  
There's no opponent ; on from room to room  
They roar, a living fiery flood of doom.  
They tramp, climb, wrestle, kick, laugh, storm, and swear ;  
Break seat and table, glass, and crockery ware,

And in the cellar's crypt invade the wines,  
As broke the Gauls upon the Italian vines.

While thus one band of Aleborough's heroes drank,  
Another sought in every nook for Frank ;  
And entering Spark's office, heavenly Law  
A moment struck their earth-born souls with awe :  
There ghosts of clients,—there the knife though felt  
Not seen,—there Hatred and Starvation dwelt ;  
And every bosom seemed to meet the stare  
Of some mysterious presence haunting there.  
But soon the rage profane anew broke out,  
And they pursued their work with yell and shout ;  
Tore down the boxes, out of window cast  
The precious papers like a dog's repast—  
Lease, mortgage, covenant, receipt, and will,  
Indictment, ledger, judgment, bond and bill ;  
And still the throng below with cheers reply  
To every armful headlong thrown from high.  
Some tear, some kick the deeds, and in the mud  
Some stamp them down, and wish 'twere Samuel's blood ;  
While others, more intent on useful toil,  
To light their household fires collect the spoil.



One hot half-hour they work without a check,  
And make the Lawyer's house an empty wreck,  
A Temple whence in wrath the gods depart,  
And leave to woe the Priest's religious heart.  
But now when Mogg is safe, and not a chance  
Remains unwatched by Whisk's high vigilance,  
The Mayor and Magistrates and stern Police  
Begin to think 'twere well to keep the peace,  
And marching down in dreadful order drive  
The crowd before them, one man chasing five ;  
While soon pell-mell the rascal many fly  
Before the lightnings of gentility,  
And heaping terror on the hindmost knaves,  
The solid thunders fall of oaken staves.  
The startled plunderers curse, their wives implore ;  
Dogs pigs and donkeys swell the wild uproar ;  
Boys, damsels, men and dames, and cart and horse,  
Are all crushed forward in the torrent's course,  
And nought but mud in handfuls, or a stone  
From some far outpost, at the band is thrown,  
Nor checks their march,—not even when, alas !  
On Mogg's right eye explodes a monstrous mass,

Which gathered round a flint befouls with mire  
And bruises half the forehead of the squire.  
He drops behind, a dozen hands with zeal  
Sustain the Member when he seems to reel ;  
But still the rest advance and clear the road,  
And set their watch round all the waste abode,  
Prevent not mischief, but give proof that none  
Can better guard against it when 'tis done.

Now Samuel's clerk, unseen all day before,  
Dawns on the chaos, and surveys it o'er,  
And grieves in each torn dirty scrap to see  
Shreds of a world where none survive but he.  
Some relics he collects, but more are cast  
A random prey to fire, and rain, and blast ;  
And still the drudge exclaims, " Ah, well-a-day,  
When he returns what will my master say ! "

Some muddy fragments, tumbled here and there,  
Were gathered up by Whisk's attentive care ;  
And 'mid them one defaced, but not destroyed,  
Gave proof how Ann's possessions were employed.

This, with the rest, to Samuel's clerk by Whisk  
Was straight restored, to save all future risk,  
But with a written list, where every deed  
Was noted down for Spark himself to read.  
And soon from mouth to mouth the rumour flew  
Of Ann's estate, which only Samuel knew ;  
And some began to ask what wondrous fate  
Concealed her, some her wealth to calculate ;  
And many said they had suspected long  
What now was plain, that Spark had done her wrong.

The Poll was over ; Mogg, declared the man,  
Was hailed with shouts by every partisan,  
And chaired at once. The banners, cheers, and crowd  
Might well make any mortal spirit proud ;  
But 'mid this greatness, human still was Mogg,  
And still his towering glory felt a clog ;  
On his right eye, a plaster, large and black,  
Recalled to every mind the late attack.

Next morn, when from its office issued wet  
"The Aleborough Chronicle and World's Gazette,"

In five close columns all mankind might read  
The Election's course, with all its word and deed.  
"Enough," exclaimed the Editor, "the Earth  
With rapture hails Time's last illustrious birth,  
And all mankind, from China to Peru,  
Will see what wonders Aleborough's choice can do."

Elsewhere the Paper bade its readers mark  
The retribution fallen on Mister Spark,  
And said, "A secret big with strange event  
Is known to us, though few may guess what's meant.  
It shall be told in time. Enough to say,  
The Reds' young candidate is flown away,  
And, as 'tis rumoured, though he lost his seat,  
Took a fair friend to grace his quick retreat.  
But stranger far, 'tis said young Mister S——e  
Has also carried off a wife from hence.  
And, last of wonders, and by far the chief,  
A thing, though certain, almost past belief,  
The rich and honoured dame of N——n Park  
Has suddenly eloped with Mister S——k ;

But whether wedlock's ties have joined the pair,  
Or only love's, we are not quite aware."

This pungent notice quick reception found,  
And flew, like wind, the whole three kingdoms round.  
Among the virtuous friends of Mistress Spence,  
It shocked their silken gloss of innocence ;  
And thus, on her return from Dover's shore,  
All eyes looked past her, shut was every door,  
And that she miracle of Truth and Taste,  
Was left a crystal pillar in a waste.

Enraged with Samuel for the world's offence,  
She gave to Whisk's control the lands of Spence ;  
And Spark, no more a reputable man,  
And forfeiting the wealth he stole from Ann,  
Became a convert to Millennial views,  
And preached the speedy calling of the Jews,  
Maintained that atheists only can suppose  
The Hebrew bards wrote anything but prose,  
And kept a box for pence that should provide  
The facts in Scripture clearly prophesied.

To silent rapture so must yield the chant  
Whose theme is all that Britons justly vaunt ;  
And as the Song of Troy has its renown,  
May this be called the Song of Aleborough Town.

THE END.

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